



THE BRAILLE MONITOR

Voice of the
National Federation of the Blind

SEPTEMBER - 1972

The National Federation of the Blind is not an organization speaking for the blind—it is the blind speaking for themselves.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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If you or a friend wish to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the sum of \$_____ (or, "_____ percent of my net estate", or "the following stocks and bonds: _____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons and to be held and administered by direction of its Executive Committee."

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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CONVENTION ROUNDUP

Introduction

The best and the largest Convention of blind people ever, convened in Chicago, Illinois, July 1-8, 1972. Many people, blind and sighted, staff and volunteers, local, state, and national, bent their efforts to the success achieved. The tight, efficient planning and execution led by our President, with great support from the host affiliate, the Illinois Congress of the Blind, was evident. The setting--Chicago's Palmer House--from the smallest, well-appointed sleeping room to the luxurious penthouse occupied by our Presidential family, added to the charm. The Palmer House staff served their guests with cheerful efficiency. They needed their good nature to handle the huge crowd.

Chicago is obviously the NFB's kind of town. There were many highlights during the week-long conclave. But some stand out more prominently. This was the largest group of blind persons ever assembled anywhere, at any time. There was the spontaneous and angry reaction of the delegates to the despicable attack made on the organized blind movement by that small group of dissidents expelled from the NFB twelve years ago, the American Council of the Blind. (Details are printed in the July 1972 issue of *The Braille Monitor*.) There was the unequivocal confrontation with the National Accreditation Council. (See the August issue of *The Braille Monitor*.) At the banquet, the conventioners heard a strong and stirring call from President Jernigan to again join him on the barricades. The President's address is printed elsewhere in this issue. Then, there

were the favorable commitments made by John D. Twiname, Administrator of the Social and Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to the organized blind.

Each year the National Convention is becoming more packed with activities and events. This year was no exception. Since all meetings of committees, divisions, and groups, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, are open to all, many were pressed with hard choices. There were meetings of the NFB in Computer Science, the Resolutions Committee, the Music Division, the White Cane and State Fund Raising Committee, the gathering of the National Association of Blind Secretaries and Transcribers, the Teachers Division, the Blind Merchants Division, the Blind Lawyers Division, the Student Division, and the Sheltered Shop Employees Division. Meetings were held by members and those interested in the Membership Committee, Scholarship Committee, Correspondence Committee, Endowment Fund Committee, Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee, Committee on the Senior Blind, and the Research and Evaluation Committee.

There was a reception gala on Monday evening. In the receiving line were the National Officers, Board Members, Staff, and the leaders of the host affiliate. Everyone had the opportunity to meet and greet every person attending the Convention. The hospitality room was crowded every evening but the Wednesday night get together, hosted by the Illinoisans was a smashing success.

Executive Committee Meeting

Those attending the Executive Committee meeting on Monday morning—and there were hundreds—took the President at his word when he said “If anyone has anything he really wants to say, I’ll try to see that he has an opportunity to do it before the meeting is over.” So many were participating that he finally had to admonish them: “This Committee belongs to the Federation, so it will do what the Convention wants it to. But the Executive Committee will never get its work done if it is conducted as a general Convention session.” However, on important questions the audience was allowed to speak and a number of consensus votes were recorded.

The President assured the group that “When we go into Convention session, remember that every person who is here, who is a member of any local affiliate, or a member at large, or whatever, has a right to speak on the floor.” He then went on to explain how resolutions are handled. “Resolutions may either come from the Executive Committee straight to the Convention floor, or they may come through the Resolutions Committee. If you as an individual member have a resolution you want to present, you take it to the Resolutions Committee. That committee may handle it in a number of ways: It may consider the resolution and recommend it out to pass; it may consider it and recommend that it not pass; it may consider it and propose that you change it, which you may agree to do; it may consider it and propose that you change it, which you may not agree to do; or it may ask you to withdraw it, which you may agree to do; or it may ask you to withdraw it which you may not be willing to do. In

any case, the Resolutions Committee may not bottle up a resolution. If you have a resolution and you want to present it, it’s got to go to the Committee for consideration. But if you don’t like what they do with it, you may have it presented on the floor and it will be discussed and debated by this Convention.”

There is no other organization which handles these affairs in so open and free a manner.

Two new large, active affiliates were formally accepted into the Federation and their officers present introduced—Mississippi and Louisiana. The Federation time-table, as announced at the Executive Committee, is to have affiliates in all states no later than 1975.

Last year’s successful Christmas Record has led to further ventures in public relations through radio and television. A four-record promotional set and two one-minute, and one thirty-second t.v. spot, were made available for use by local and State affiliates. The response indicates that this is a popular project and the members are most anxious to spread Federationism.

The Braille Monitor, inkprint edition, is in the process of being bound. Sets covering the years 1957-1970 will sell for \$175. *The Monitor* for 1971 and later years will sell for \$15 per volume.

Group life insurance for NFB members has been under study by the Executive Committee. The report to the Committee by Sub-committee Chairman Don Capps, elicited much discussion among the members of the Committee and those present. A number of consensus

votes indicated that there was more interest in hospital/health insurance than in life contracts and that matter was assigned to the Sub-committee for further study.

After a reading of the pertinent legal papers and full discussion, the Executive Committee voted to recommend to the Convention to separate from general use by incorporation, the Jacobus tenBroek Memorial Endowment Fund. These funds are not to be used except in dire emergency, for general operating purposes. Discussion was also held concerning the establishment of a reserve fund.

Three people were nominated and approved for one-year terms as members of the NFB Board of Directors—Dr. Isabelle L. D. Grant, Dr. Jacob Freid, and the president of the Student Division, currently Marc Maurer.

The Federation carries its usual load of cases on behalf of blind people who have been discriminated against in one way or another so that they do not enjoy the rights of first class citizens. But now, the Federation has another kind of case to deal with—the suit by the ACB against the Federation, bringing a class action in Iowa against the members of the Board of the Iowa Commission for the Blind and its esteemed Director who is our President. The President read to the Convention the petition of the plaintiffs' and the letter which he sent to State and Chapter presidents concerning the matter. (See *The Braille Monitor*, July 1972)

The President introduced honored guests, among them a member of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, Mrs. Wayne Bonnell.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Executive Committeeman William Dwyer of New York who passed away last fall.

Throughout the morning's session the mounting registration figures were announced. By the time the Executive Committee meeting adjourned, 11:45 a.m., registration had reached 1096 and banquet tickets had been purchased by 1011.

BUSINESS SESSIONS

The business sessions opened Tuesday morning with the singing of the Federation song and signalled the sense of dedication and unity which pervaded all sessions. The always dramatic roll call of the States, from Alabama to Wyoming, which followed, brought forth the strength of the organization as State after State recited the numbers in the delegations who had come by every means of transportation to take part in this great gathering. Every State affiliate responded to the roll call. Interested people from the unaffiliated States were also present. As has been the custom since 1964, five foreign countries were represented. Many State affiliates chartered buses—some more than one—and California arranged a package deal with an airline for its many representatives.

The President's Report

The past year in this organization has been the most significant and the most momentous year we as an organized movement have ever experienced. I think that the evidence of that can be seen in the numbers that are here today. If you will consider that when we met in Los

Angeles in 1967, 325 hotel rooms were used, that today we have about tripled that number; if you will consider that that momentum has been on a steeply rising gradient, you will see, at least in numbers, what the last year has meant. In 1970 we used 509 hotel rooms. In 1971 we used 661. Today we are way over that number and don't know what we will end up with. What it will be next year will depend on what you and I do during the ensuing twelve months. However, numbers alone do not tell the story. They are simply indicative of what we are doing as a movement.

Another indicator of the mood, the tone in the country, can be found in the increasing name changes of our affiliates. As you heard this morning, nineteen affiliates changed their names during the past year from whatever they were, to National Federation of the Blind of (name of State). Now, two new affiliates came in with that name. Therefore, at this year's banquet on Thursday evening, twenty-one charters will be presented to affiliates. Ten affiliates changed their names before last year's convention to National Federation of the Blind of (name of State), and, therefore, that means that thirty-one of our forty-seven affiliates in forty-six states have changed their names, or have come in, with the name National Federation of the Blind of (name of State). I believe that in the foreseeable future, we will be uniform in name throughout the country. I would have thought some years ago [applause] and I am sure that most of you would have thought that this would not have been possible. However, it was possible. Many things are if we try to make them that way. [Applause] Now let me just wind up the talk of new affiliates in this manner. This year, of course, as I've

said, we had two new ones: Mississippi, and later, Louisiana. Under no circumstances will we be without affiliates in all fifty states and the District of Columbia any later than 1975. [Cheers and applause]. We are an organization now, of sizable resources and sizable influence and power in the country, and, of course, this means that we have sizable opposition, as would be expected.

I want to talk with you a little bit about funding, about physical plant, and about the relationship existing between members, local and State affiliates, and the National Office.

First, let me say a word about funding. I do not intend to give you a financial report. That will come on Friday from the able Chairman of the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance. This has been our most successful year financially. We have had reverses. If Bernie Gerchen were here, he would say, as he always does, "Well, you know, there are good things and bad things." Well, he's not here, so I'll say it for him. There are good things and bad things in the last year, but as far as I'm concerned, there are many more good than bad. . . . It is desirable, I think, that we get beyond dependence upon the immediate mail campaigns. Therefore, we may well come back with other recommendations of business ventures or, of course, alternatively, we hope that the mails will keep doing better. We hope also that our Endowment Fund will keep growing. We are getting lots of bequests and wills now, a great many of them. Our mailings are helping to do that. Our publications in *The Monitor* and other literature are helping to do it. Our Endowment Fund is growing; again, you'll hear about that.

What does this money go for? Well, a good deal of it goes for printing and distribution of *The Monitor*. You will hear something more about *The Monitor* later. And I think that perhaps it's the best money we ever spent. [Applause] In addition to that, you will hear this afternoon and see the films and the recordings that we are sending out to radio and t.v. stations. Again, a lot of money went into the production of these records and films. Our general recorded material that we make available to the States—many thousands of dollars go into that. We have fought legal cases in the Courts. As I say, you will get the details in the financial report, but in the overall, my statement to you is that the Federation is in good health financially. We do have resources. We do not have unlimited money but we're moving and we're moving enough that our friends can take heart and our opponents can worry. [Applause]

I want to say just a word about physical plant. Last year this Convention passed a resolution saying that the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, could purchase a building, lease space, remodel, build a building, in other words, that we ought to get a headquarters. We looked and thought, and I consulted constantly and continuously with the Executive Committee, and the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance. We decided that at the present time we should not either buy a building or build a building, because to do either one and have it full time would probably bring us down at close to zero in funding. We didn't figure we ought to do that. What we have done is this: We have rented space and got it at very favorable terms in the Randolph Hotel building in Des Moines. Since 1970, we have been in

the Randolph, but we had to expand. In November we rented all of the mezzanine in the Randolph; in February we rented some more space; and in June we rented all the rest of the second floor. That runs to about 12,000 square feet. It's good space, it's usable, and it meets our needs. In addition, we've made them throw in three parking places and some other fringe benefits of the sort. What it means is that we are now consolidating. We are moving all of our materials to be distributed from the Berkeley office to Des Moines. The Berkeley office will handle all printing, as it has; it will handle *The Monitor*, as it has; it will mail out the Presidential releases, as it has; but at the same time, the Des Moines office will mail out all of the materials that you may want. We have not only those 25,000 coasters I have talked about, but we have tens of thousands of records, materials in Braille, print, and so forth. Matter of fact, when Mrs. tenBroek sent me from the Berkeley office, the material that we transferred from there, I was astounded because it was almost thirteen tons and we already had that much in the Des Moines office. So you own somewhere between twenty-five and thirty tons of material now, and it's growing all the time. When we get through with this banquet and this Convention and all the other material we'll put into Braille, print and on records, we'll have some more tons. Anyway, all of this is an indication of where we're going.

Now, we did not set up a Braille press, except for one secondhand press we have and the one stereotyper. Anyway, for the immediate future at least, the plan is that until we get consolidated, we are probably not going to set up any further press work. The agenda for this Convention, however, was printed on the

Braille press that we own. The NFB also owns a station wagon van in Des Moines, and a truck in Berkeley which we use to transport stuff to the post office and back and such like. We are now set up with the facilities and the resources and the manpower to give the kind of services we ought to give.

Now, this leads me to talk with you a little bit about the relationship we all have with each other. What should the individual do? How does he participate in the movement? and what should the local affiliate do? And what should the State affiliate do and what should the National Office do? Unless we are clear with each other on that, I think that all else may be for naught. Well, as I see it, the individual first and foremost must study his *Monitor*, study his materials, see the releases and that he is familiar with them, and must bear personal witness to others and to himself as to what the Federation means. This is the first thing that the individual has to do, and it can't be overemphasized in importance. He must find other blind people and distribute materials to them and be an example to them. He must hunt new members. He must take part at chapter meetings, and State activities.

Now, what should the local and State affiliates do as opposed to the National Office? I want to read to you something and I think it makes a point I would like to make and perhaps it makes it as well as I can in any other way. It's a letter that I received in November of last year. It says: "I recently learned of the National Federation of the Blind and I have read your *Braille Monitor*." Observe the word "your." "I am sure that you especially can appreciate the fact that blind people are discriminated against when we try to find

employment. And this is the reason that I am writing to you now. I am a blind radio announcer with two years' experience on a college station and I hold an FCC third class radio telephone license. My problem is discrimination. Some employers will say that they don't think that I can handle the job because I am blind and some of them will say that they have no openings. I would be most grateful to the National Federation of the Blind for some desperately needed assistance if it is at all possible. Thank you very much. Yours cordially."

At first that seems like the kind of letter that ought to bring a response from the National President. But, instead, it brought from me, questions. I responded thusly: "November 15. I have your letter of November 8, and I thank you for it. The National Office of the Federation will, of course, do all that it can to be of help to you. You say that you have read *The Monitor*. This is a good beginning. I hope that you will read it from cover to cover each month and that you will read it thoroughly. Independence and resistance to discrimination begin necessarily in the heart of the individual and the individual must be informed in order to be effective. Next, I hope that you are an active member of the National Federation of the Blind in your State. In your State this means being a member of the (and I gave the name of the State affiliate). The _____ State affiliate should be interested in disseminating publicity and information about the capabilities of blind people and you should help in the work. None of us can get more out of the Federation than we put into it collectively. The (name of State affiliate) will also, I am sure, be willing to help you make contacts and conduct negotiations.

What I am really saying is this: Discrimination can only be eliminated by changing the atmosphere concerning blindness in the State and nation, not merely by working on the individual cases. In States which carry on a sustained public relations program, which have an active legislative program and pass such bills as the NFB Model White Cane Law, which have a large membership who read *The Monitor* and study the Presidential Releases, states, in other words, in which the blind live and think Federationism on a daily basis, conditions improve; opportunities for the blind increase and discrimination begins to diminish. Over the long haul there is no other way.

Having said all these things let me go on to say that the National Office of the Federation will do all that it can to assist you in your search for employment. From your statement, I assume that you are already working in the movement and exerting yourself to try to make things better for the blind. I also assume that you are keeping yourself informed. You can count on the support of the National Office."

What I was really saying to him is this: Don't come to the National Office with a problem like that to start with. Go to your State affiliate because the National Office is only those of us from State affiliates who are in the National Office. It is the job of the State affiliate to start and do all that it can, and the job of the National Office is to back it up. But it is not up to us at the national level to fight individual cases of discrimination. In other words, this is a movement of grass roots operation. It has to be kept that way.

Now I am sure that Bob Acosta

won't mind if I read you a brief exchange of letters that I had with him in January of this year. He wrote to me: "We are once again experiencing some problems with a local bank in the southern California area. Crocker Citizens National Bank in West Los Angeles has refused to allow one of our chapter members to open a checking account. They say that it is because she cannot write her signature in a consistent manner. The bank claims that this is for their protection. I have enclosed some letters for your consideration. I do hope that the Federation will be able to help us straighten this matter out." Well, what should I have written to him? Whatever I should have written, I wrote this: "Dear Bob: I have your letter concerning the problem of the bank, and I believe that you should begin by seeing what can be done about it by the National Federation of the Blind of California. I know that Tony will do everything possible to see that the matter is resolved. If the State affiliate cannot do the job and wishes to ask for the intervention of the National Office, then assistance certainly will be forthcoming. However, if we do not fully utilize the resources we have at the State level, the system will break down and the National Office will be unable to function effectively at all. I am sure that you will appreciate my position in this matter. By all means keep me informed. Cordially." With a copy to Tony Mannino.

I hope the point I am making is clear, and hope also that you agree with it. It is that the National Office simply must not be expected to do all of the work. It cannot be done. [Applause] What the National Office ought to do, as I see it, is to make the kind of records, the kind of material, the kind of publicity releases that we have been talking about; that it

should back up the State affiliates when their resources aren't adequate and they've exhausted their efforts. It should coordinate national legislation. That's what the National Office ought to do.

Let me say a word about the legal cases. We've been very active on the legal front this year. We won the *Keener* case in September, and Mary Jane Keener, you read about it in *The Monitor* so I don't need to go into the details, took the FCC test and passed it. So that was a won case. [Applause]. The *Evelyn Weckerly* case: That case we have been fighting year after year. Carl Schier wrote me on December 1, that the Court of Appeals had ruled in our favor. I sent that news out to everybody with a jubilant letter, and then he wrote me on January 26 that the court had for the third time reversed itself, and we were back before the Supreme Court. So he wrote me on March 21 to say that we had been granted leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Michigan and that's where we still are, as far as I know, and we'll be fighting the *Weckerly* case until we win it or until we all die. [Applause]

There is some national legislation that I need to discuss with you. One of the most important pieces of legislation ever to be passed is a fairly unheralded one. This deals with the amendments to the Education Act, and it answers again, the question which sometimes comes up: What good does the Federation do and what does it accomplish? Year after year we have gone in, and have done so alone by the way, to ask that the Congress prohibit discrimination against the blind in educational institutions receiving Federal money. The American Council hasn't ever submitted such an amendment nor have the agencies doing work with the blind.

The Education Act Amendments of 1972 contain a very simple, direct statement. Let me read it to you, and then consider what the consequences are. This is now law. It has been signed by the President, *and* the Federation is the only one that submitted and supported this amendment. Notice how beautifully simple it is: "Prohibition against discrimination against the blind. Section 904. No person in the United States shall on the ground of blindness or severely impaired vision be denied admission in any course of study by a recipient of Federal financial assistance for any education program or activity but nothing herein shall be construed to require any such institution to provide any special services to such person because of his blindness or visual impairment." [Cheers and applause] We have already talked with the education people and they assure us that this will be enforced. Consider what it means. No law school, no college, no elementary school, no high school, no any kind of school, can deny you the right to attend because you are blind or visually handicapped. No such school can deny you the right to take any course in that school. Now just consider what that means at one stroke. It's revolutionary in this country's history and the Federation did that. So the students ought to know and also everybody else ought to ponder what that means.

I have been asked some questions, and I think one or two of them deserve comment here. Why should the national President assign people who are to attend State conventions as national representatives even when the State is paying the way, which it sometimes does? Well, the answer is simple. We've got to coordinate this effort. If we don't, people run off in all directions. I always try as

President to take into account the wishes of a State, but the constitution is very clear that the President of this organization is to coordinate the activities of committees and individuals and groups working in the Federation. This is an essential if we're going to have a unified movement.

Now, let me talk a little bit about my work load, and to some point and purpose I hope. I do not take vacation time and I do not take holiday time, and I'm not complaining about it. After all, I voluntarily assumed the load I assumed. But I do think it's fair for you to help as much as you can. You can do that in several ways. In the first place, you should send me immediately, writeups of your State conventions. Sometimes we get them, sometimes we don't, sometimes we get them six months late. You should send a copy to the Berkeley office, or to Perry Sundquist at his office, and they're both listed in *The Monitor*. And then you should send me a copy, and you should tell me that you've sent them a copy. Otherwise I may not know that you have, and, in order to save time, I may make a copy and send it on to them, and waste your money by duplicating what you've already done. That's a waste of my time and effort. You should tell me you've sent them a copy, in other words. After any State or local election you ought to send a list of the officers and the board members to the National Office with a copy to Berkeley, and you ought to tell me you've sent it to Berkeley. You ought to be sure you give me the addresses, the phone numbers, the zip codes, and know that they're accurate. And the same with new chapters, and name changes of States or chapters, and any individual address change. In other words, data should be

funneled in but you ought to tell me that you've done it. Some of the letters that you send me you may not feel need an answer. I would very much appreciate it if you would tell me on the bottom of your letter that I do not need to answer this letter if you don't think I do. Now why? Because I feel that I have some obligations to you and one of those obligations is courtesy, and good relationships. I will tend, if I can find the time, to answer your letters even though it may not need an answer, just to acknowledge that I got it, and to let you know that it's there, and that I appreciate it. Don't make me do that unless you feel that I need to do it. Write me as often as you will, by all means, but if you don't think you have to have answer, tell me. It will save my time. I hope you think that's reasonable.

The followed a discussion of the Iowa law suit.

I want to talk with you finally about one other matter. This year has been one of real progress, as I said. It's been one of trial also. It is not pleasant to be sued in the courts and it is not pleasant to be called a thief. It is not pleasant to engage in controversy. It is pleasant to see blind persons make progress and advancement. [Applause] I said to you last year that as far as I'm concerned there is a covenant which exists between the President of this organization and between the Convention and the membership, and I mean every member no matter how humble that member may be, no matter whether he has ever held an office. I've tried to keep faith with you and I believe you've kept faith with me. I believe that is why we are the organization we are. I believe that we are truly democratic and it doesn't bother me that our opponents call us all kinds of

things. I don't mind that our opponents say that we're undemocratic, for I know what we are and you know what we are, and our opponents can think what they please. It does not mean, being democratic, as I said last year, that fifteen people sign every check. It means the power to remove from office the man who signs the check if he doesn't do it the way you want it done. It means the power to hold responsible. Democratic forms can be used to defeat the will of the people. I've seen it done. My concept of the presidency of this corporation is something like this: Not simply that I am elected to preside impartially over a group of people and try to determine, sort of with no leadership, what the consensus may be and then simply do nothing. That's not my conception of the president. My conception of the presidency is that you elected me to lead. And as I told you last year and as I meant then, as long as I'm president of this outfit, so help me God, I am going to lead it. [Applause] That means, as far as I'm concerned, the willingness to take chances. It means as far as I'm concerned, not just being a chairman without a program. It means being willing to go out and risk that you will approve what I've done. To the best of my ability, I will try to do what you want me to do, if I know what it is. I will try as best I know how to reflect your wishes. But when I think I know what those wishes are, and when you've spoken, then I am going to get out there in front and be on the cutting edge of things. I am going to do that regardless of what it costs me, and I am going to do that regardless of what anybody thinks about it. I am going to do that no matter how anybody feels about it because I think that if this outfit is not a militant, social action, fighting outfit we might as well close up shop and

go home. [Applause] That is what I've meant when I have talked to you about joining me on the barricades and that is what I think we have to mean. We are big business, as I have said earlier, but we're more than that. We are a cohesive, spiritual movement; we're a crusade; we are an army of liberation; we are a tough fighting force; we are a responsible organization; we are a call to conscience. In the long run, and I guess in the short run too, we're absolutely unstoppable; we are unbeatable and I think that is because we have something that very few groups have. I think we have love for each other and love for our fellow blind. [Applause] And it is because we've never become "establishment" in the bad sense of that term, that is, we care and we've shown that we care. And I think my final statement to you is this: During the year ahead there will be battles. When there are battles there are always costs, always scars, always casualties. But we are a crusade. We do have resources. As I told you yesterday, the blind can never go back to where they were. No matter what happens, we can never again be second class citizens. [Applause] Anybody who makes the mistake of thinking that we will ever go back to the rocking chair and to second class citizenship had better look out because we are not going to do it. [Applause] So with that in mind, I conclude my report to you and say that in the year ahead we will have plenty of occasion to join each other on the barricades—but we will prevail. [Prolonged cheers and applause.]

Program Summary

In her review of the activities of the Berkeley Office, Hazel tenBroek reported that *The Monitor* lists, to no one's

surprise, continue to grow. During the first six months of 1972, 70,850 copies were distributed in Braille, inkprint, and on talking book records. It will take 12,200 copies to meet the requirements of the August lists. It would save NFB funds—your money—if people would let the Berkeley office know about address changes, *before* they occur. Mrs. tenBroek pointed out that it is possible to put directions for delivery of *The Monitor* on individual labels, for instance, “Leave inside screen door.” If you have problems with mailings, write to the Berkeley office. If you have material you would like considered for publication, write to the Editor, Perry Sundquist.

Three distinguished scientists discussed the advances made during the past ten years in new devices for the blind. The Braillemboss is a teletype-like device which produces pages of Braille and can be used by blind programmers to provide access to computers, as well as having other uses. Sensory aids for the blind, such as mobility devices, direct reading machines, and transcription equipment and systems and vision-substitute systems were discussed. Finally the Optacon was described. However, the men of science were quite candid in saying that most of these systems were still in the experimental stages.

Edward F. Rose, Director of Public Policy Employment Programs for the U. S. Civil Service Commission, reviewed the current programs in his department. His remarks appear elsewhere in this issue.

Larry A. McKeever, President of Lariam Associates of Des Moines, Iowa, introduced the recorded and televised promotion vehicles and talked about the

image of the Federation in public education and information.

Wednesday

The first order of business was the election of officers and executive committeemen. Perhaps no more eloquent testimony to the unity and enthusiasms which pervaded the entire Convention could be found than in the fact that each of the officers and the incumbent members of the Executive Committee were elected for two-year terms by acclamation: Kenneth Jernigan of Iowa, President; Donald C. Capps of South Carolina, First Vice President; James Coutts of Missouri, replacing retiring Harold Reagan, as Second Vice President; Lawrence (Muzzy) Marcelino of California as Secretary; and the veteran Franklin VanVliet of New Hampshire as Treasurer. Dr. Mae Davidow of Pennsylvania, Ned Graham of Maryland, and Manuel Urena of Iowa were returned to the Executive Committee for two-year terms. Shirley Lebowitz of Connecticut was elected to complete a one-year term on the Committee and Harvey Webb of Alabama was elected to a two-year term.

December 7, 1971, said President Jernigan, in his address to the Convention on NAC, was a day which would live in infamy in the world of the blind. He had been invited to speak to the Board of Directors of the National Accreditation Council on that day and reiterated that the organized blind are simply not going to allow all of the services for the blind, public and private, to come under the control of one private agency run by the American Foundation for the Blind. Individual blind persons were denied the right to attend the Board meeting as

observers. President Jernigan himself, a long-time member of the NAC Board, was met with hostility and resentment. He stated that NAC simply had no involvement with the gut issues facing blind persons or with the blind consumers of services. NAC, he contends, was conceived and structured undemocratically and the blind members of the Board (6 out of 34) constituted mere tokenism instead of having a major voice in its operation. By a vote of 6 to 20 the NAC Board defeated his motion to admit blind individuals to its Board meetings as observers. He then made a dramatic announcement to the Convention—that he is no longer a member of NAC's Board and stated that we must all demand admission to NAC meetings. Further, the organized blind must demand that no agencies in the States, either public or private, be permitted to receive or accept accreditation from this tool of some misguided agencies. For more details concerning the sad situation surrounding NAC, see the August, 1972, issue of *The Braille Monitor*.

Dr. Jacob Freid, Executive Director of the Jewish Braille Institute of America, gave a thoughtful discourse on public education and the challenge for equality of employment opportunity. He stressed that the critical problems faced by the blind stem from society's views concerning the blind. We need and must continue to struggle for economic and social justice and to be masters of our own destinies. The status of first-class citizenship, he emphasized, can be won only through public education.

The session concluded with the reading and distribution of the White Cane Safety Day Proclamation by the President

of the United States.

This was "tour day" and the delegates and their friends had a choice of four events. There was a trip to the Museum of Science and Industry; a visit to the Hadley School for the Blind in Winnetka, Illinois; a shopping tour in Chicago's world-famous Loop; and a combination tour to the Illinois Visually Handicapped Institute and the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind. The tours were "sold out" early in the game, attesting to the popularity of this feature.

Organizing, with emphasis on our two new affiliates, provided the topic of discussion for panelists Don Capps, John Taylor, Albert Beasley, E. U. Parker, Jr., and Harvey Webb. The Convention was given an interesting inside look at what happened in Mississippi and Louisiana.

A representative of the Johanna Bureau for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of Chicago outlined the work of this group. This Bureau maintains large-type and tape recording departments as well as Braille. It was refreshing to learn that the Bureau has as its key policy the need to find out just what the needs of the blind are and to meet those needs—never to try to tell the blind what to read.

Dr. Richard Kinney, Executive Vice-President of the Hadley School for the Blind, spoke on challenges we live by: independence without sight and hearing. Dr. Kinney ought to know since he is both deaf and blind. He reported on the work being carried on by the Hadley School for the Deaf-blind. Touch, he stated, was the most important of the senses and mastering Braille is the most important single step which the deaf-blind can take,

since it increases tremendously the input from the outside world. There are only about 10,000 deaf-blind in the United States and most of these are rubella children. Dr. Kinney concluded his remarks with the philosophical observation that it was more important to know than to see; to understand than to hear.

Received with great interest was the panel "Wider Horizons for the Senior Blind," led by NFB Senior Blind Committee chairwoman, Carolyn Helmer. Topics discussed were income maintenance, the Federal food stamp program, housing, rehabilitation and social adjustment, special needs, and, especially, transportation. Participants were Perry Sundquist, John Nagle, Professor Ed Lewinson, all of the NFB; W. E. Kee from the Chicago Office of HUD; Miss Lillian Mavrin who is consultant to the Office of Chicago's Mayor on the affairs of senior citizens; and Miss Verna Due from the Regional Office of HEW.

A wide-ranging discussion of the place and future of groups and divisions within the National Federation of the Blind was moderated by President Jernigan, the panelists being the chairmen of the groups and divisions now active in the organization. It was agreed by the participants with great emphasis, that members of groups and divisions are first of all Federationists—blind people with common problems, interests, and goals. Some have additional interests and needs in specific areas—hence, groups and divisions. One "complaint" voiced by a number of people was the inability to take part in more than one group—but short of lengthening Conventions into another week, no reasonable solution presented

itself.

Robert S. Bray, Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, spoke on the work of his Division. The lengthy question-and-answer period featured exchanges on several issues between members of the Convention and the speaker. The atmosphere was correct but cool on both sides.

A panel discussion on employment for the blind—new careers and new initiatives wound up the afternoon session. The participants represented such varied and interesting occupations as insurance agent, auto-club racer, closed microphone reporter, telephone answering and radio paging service, and a field representative for the National Education Association.

The Banquet:

The chandeliers of the Grand Ballroom were outshone by the crowd of 1253 persons who gathered for what is always the highpoint of NFB Conventions—the banquet. The air was filled with excitement, enthusiasm, and a feeling of such unity that it brought a spontaneous outburst of song. Charters were awarded to nineteen affiliates who had changed their names to National Federation of the Blind of (name of State) and to our two new affiliates—Mississippi and Louisiana. A physics major from Berkeley, California, Kent Cullers, was the recipient of the \$1200 Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship.

The address of the President was a hard-hitting, stirring call to join him at the barricades in the fight against all discrimination against the blind. That

address is reprinted herein in full. It is available on talking book records so that all may hear it just as it was given and most thunderously received at the banquet. NFB First Vice President Don Capps did his usual fine job as master of ceremonies.

Friday:

The Federation in the World featured as speakers Robert Hunt, Chairman of the Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee, and Dr. Isabelle L. D. Grant, Treasurer of the International Federation of the Blind. President Jernigan was presented with the original of a beautiful pen and ink drawing entitled "The Old Shack" prints of which the Committee is selling to raise funds for the IFB. Mr. Hunt described the activities of the Committee such as packing Braille books to send to the blind in foreign countries, especially text books for schools and students. Dr. Grant spoke briefly on making world Federationism a reality and the necessity for the blind of the United States to continue financial underpinning for a while longer with such projects as our Miss-A-Meal which raised over \$10,000 during the past two and a half years. She reported that twenty-one nations were represented at the recent IFB Executive Committee meeting held in Paris, and that thirty-one nations are now members of the IFB with several others seeking admission.

John Nagle, Chief of the NFB's Washington Office, gave a rundown on the current status of legislation affecting the welfare of the blind. This report is printed in this issue.

One of the outstanding features of

the Convention program was the talk with John D. Twiname, Administrator of the Social and Rehabilitation Services of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He stated that he thought the mission of his section should be to act as advocate for disadvantaged persons. (See in this issue the Jernigan-Twiname Colloquy)

The concluding item of Friday morning's session was a live telephone conversation with Congressman Roman Pucinski who expressed his interest in our concerns and hopes to cooperate with us in eliminating discrimination in employment.

Friday afternoon was given over to detailed reports covering the business of the NFB--the White Cane Report by Anthony G. Mannino, National White Cane Week Chairman; the Jacobus tenBroek Memorial Endowment Fund by Lawrence Marcelino, Endowment Fund Chairman; and the Report of the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance by its Chairman, Perry Sundquist. Manuel Urena, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, then presented the proposed resolutions to the Convention. The twenty-seven resolutions considered by the Convention are printed at the end of this issue of *The Braille Monitor*.

The final item on the agenda was a consideration of future sites for the NFB National Conventions. Heretofore, States bid spiritedly to back up their invitations. However, the phenomenal growth of the organized blind movement has brought real problems with this method of selection. Put simply before the Convention by President Jernigan was the question: do we have states or rates? Both

the hotel rates and the size of the hotels are now of overriding importance. Next year's Convention, for instance, will require between 900 and 1,000 rooms in a large hotel. It was moved, seconded, and carried that henceforth the Convention cease voting on Convention sites, authorize the President to negotiate with hotels for suitable rates and sufficient

number of rooms, and, after conferring with the Executive Committee, make the decision.

Thus concluded the largest, most enthusiastic Convention ever held by the NFB--and an end to the greatest gathering of blind persons ever held in the world--until next year in New York.

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BANQUET ADDRESS

BLINDNESS—THE NEW GENERATION

by
Kenneth Jernigan

When I was a schoolboy taking literature classes, there was a helpful formula which told something of the development of the short story in America. It went like this: "Poe standardized it; Bret Harte localized it; Hawthorne moralized it; O'Henry humanized it; and Mark Twain humorized it."

It seems to me that this formula, with a little rearrangement, might well apply to the problem of blindness as it has come to be defined and dealt with by various social groups and interests. Thus we might say of blindness that many of the professional agencies tend to dehumanize it; the experts jargonize it; the counselors psychoanalyze it; the journalists sentimentalize it; the fund raisers melodramatize it; and the organized blind—what do we do?—we recognize it, naturalize it, and seek to de-mythicize it.

In the face of all these "izers" and "izings," it might seem there is no end of attitudes and approaches to the problem of blindness. But I believe that underlying all the variations there are two fundamentally opposing viewpoints: One of which is positive, still believed only by a minority, and true; the other of which is negative, widely accepted as fact, and thoroughly false. In one way or another everything we of the National Federation of the Blind do or say recognizes this philosophical conflict. It has been so since our founding in 1940.

We must never forget the historic and social significance of our movement or lose perspective in the momentary triumph of victory or sadness of defeat. The course is well marked and clear. It has been from the beginning; and, unless we lose our nerve or betray our ideals, there can be absolutely no question that the future is ours.

The first 32 years constituted a generation of growth: From infancy to maturity, from weakness to strength, from innocence to experience. It was also a generation of struggle, against alien forces from without and dissident forces from within—a struggle for survival and a test of endurance. That baptismal generation is now over and finished. The struggle has been won: The tasks of early growth completed. We are now well into our second generation.

At first glance it might seem that today we find ourselves on a new battlefield, facing new issues: As—in fact, to some extent—we do. The problems of the future, which even now press upon us, might initially seem to be quite different from the problems of the past—but this is more appearance than reality.

During the first generation of the Federation, Dr. tenBroek, our beloved leader, talked to us year after year about the misconceptions and stereotypes of blindness, the false images and ancient superstitions which dog our steps and are believed by a majority of the workers in governmental and private agencies, as well as by the public at large. These misconceptions

and stereotypes, these false myths and images, still dog our steps and are still our principal problem. The thing that has changed is our strength and our numbers, and particularly, the momentum of our impact and our sense of purpose. The problem is the old problem—but we are not the old we—let there be no mistake about that. We are a new breed, the organized blind; and we are abroad in the land. We have come of age—with united action, organizational experience, resources, self-awareness, self-belief, and unshakable determination.

In the justice of our cause (and regardless of the costs) we are absolutely unstoppable and unbeatable. An increasing percentage of the public is beginning to understand, and even the agencies and foundations (some gladly and some with mulish bad temper) are coming to recognize the facts of life.

Therefore, I come to you tonight—as I have done on previous occasions and as Dr. tenBroek did before me—to talk to you about our problems as individuals and as a movement, and to plan with you the concerted action we must take.

As I have said, the choice is fundamentally one of competing philosophies. On one side is the philosophy which regards the blind as innately different and inferior to the sighted. On the other side is the philosophy which regards us as innately normal and equal to the sighted. These two conceptions compete with one another in virtually every area of life—from occupation to recreation, and from cradle to grave. One of them regards blindness as a dead end; the other regards it as a live option.

Let me offer you an illustration from what may seem the relatively unimportant area of recreation. I would not mention it at all if it were unique or exceptional. But it is not. It is the typical and standard thinking which pervades the field of work with the blind today—which fills the journals, saturates the conferences, and motivates the actions of the so-called “professionals.” It is the very heart and soul of what we as blind people must change if we are to be free citizens instead of wards—and change it we will.

A short time ago I received a book from Brigham Young University, accompanied by a letter which read: “Dear Sir: If you believe that the blind person needs to enlarge his narrowed horizons and keep himself physically strong and toned, you will be interested in the first edition of one of our newer books *SWIMMING FOR THE BLIND*, by Gloria R. Seamons.” The letter continued: “Exercise may be more important for the blind than it is for the sighted, and swimming may well be the best kind of exercise a blind person can perform.”

This communication, like the book it accompanied, fairly radiates the dead end philosophy of blindness. It begins by assuming that the blind person, any blind person, has “narrowed horizons,” which need to be enlarged—and that swimming is the best available means of doing it. Poor blind fellow, he must lack the ability to handle more serious or complicated methods of broadening his experience or enlarging his horizons. Nor is that all: “Exercise may be more important for the blind than it is for the sighted.” Why? Is it

because blind people are presumed to be immobile and passive creatures, who must be stirred and prodded into vacating the rocking chair for a little exercise?

Now, I myself happen to believe that swimming is an excellent form of recreation and exercise, *for anyone*. It is good for bald-headed men, red-headed women, gifted children, and persons who are blind—but neither more nor less for any of them than for the rest of them. To suppose otherwise is to impute a form of inferiority (of peculiar weakness) to the group singled out. This is, however, precisely the imputation of the book to which I refer, *SWIMMING FOR THE BLIND*. Thus, the introduction contains such statements as the following:

“The activities of the sightless. . . ‘are limited, and there are not many occasions when they will have an opportunity to call upon such qualities as strength, speed and endurance . . .’” Or try this one: “Shall they be handicapped with feebleness, awkwardness, and helplessness in addition to blindness? . . .” Or try this: “It is lack of energy and determination, not the want of sight that causes so many failures among the blind.”

“In swimming alone,” the book goes on to tell us, “can the average person without sight leap freely into the air without fear of injury. In swimming alone can they move freely alone while using a large number of the ‘big muscle’ groups of the body. . .”

“Sterling states,” the book points out, that “‘It offers a creative life to replace the destructive one.’ . . . Swimming is more of a social asset to the blind than the general public. A blind person fits well into a swimming party, but he often feels out of place in other activities.”¹

So says this typical bit of would-be research produced at Brigham Young University, but the blind person might well feel out of place even in a swimming party if he should practice the method devised by a scientific instructor named Belenky—who, we are told, “divided his beginning skills into eight phases. One of these phases included a ‘whomping’ movement in which the student was on ‘all fours’ in the shallow water. It was accomplished by a jump in which both hands were lifted out of the water.”²

Despite the adventurousness of the “whomping” movement, Belenky (as it turns out) is far from adventurous concerning the abilities and general competence of the blind. “Any person,” he is quoted as writing, “but particularly a blind child, should at all times be aware not only of his abilities in the water, but his limitations as well. He should strive to overcome these limitations, but never can he be permitted to be foolhardy.”³

Another expert named Sterling carries this prudence and caution even farther. He recommends that the blind swimmer use “a sponge taped to the top of the swim cap or head to avoid injury and lessen tension in learning to swim on the back.”⁴

If the sponge on the head doesn’t relieve all the tension of the swimmer, there is always the therapy of music—which we are told, “has been found to be beneficial for

relaxing the students before the class begins or during the play period. It also provides a rhythm to which a swimmer may match his strokes. When piped underwater, music can make inviting the practice of rhythmic breathing.”⁵

With a sponge on top, and music underneath, what more could the blind swimmer desire? Well, perhaps, he could be coddled, comforted, and controlled in the course of his training as exemplified by the following five-step set of instructions under the heading, “Health and Safety Measures:”

“1. The instructor must be the eyes for the visually impaired swimmer. Students should be met at the dressing room door and led to the pool at the shallow end . . .

“2. The teacher must work in the water with the swimmer. The student should not be over-protected, however, but should be encouraged to become as independent as possible.

“3. The instructor must be aware of danger signals such as chilling or over exertion and should allow the student to leave when necessary.

“4. If it is found necessary to leave the student, he should be placed in contact with the side of the pool, the deck, or a chair.

“5. The blind often have a discharge from the eyes and nose. Facial tissues should be kept handy.”⁶

And one final warning from this expert to the teacher: “Each student should be allowed to work at his own rate, for rushing may impede learning. Generally the sightless progress more slowly than their seeing peers. Repetition, therefore, is important.”⁷

If I may sum up the essential points of these various instructions, they would seem to be as follows: The Blind are dumber than other people. They are weepers and sniffers. They cannot be trusted to find their own way to the pool or be left alone, even in shallow water. Even more briefly, I might sum up what they are saying like this: You can lead the blind to water, but you can’t let them think.

To these would-be scientists, with their insulting drivel, we the blind have something to say: You claim to be experts about blindness, and you say you are professionals; but in reality you are neither. You are witch doctors and fakes. In the name of helping us you hurt us, and you call it “professionalism.” You even do it with our own tax money. We are here to tell you that we have had enough, and we are also here to tell you that we are going to put a stop to what you are doing. Call us radicals and militants if you will, but heed what we say. We have the will and the means to give force to our words, and your days are numbered!

If what I have been describing were unique, we might pass over it with amusement and

even perhaps with tolerance. But it is, as I have already indicated, far from isolated. It runs like a polluted stream through most of the professional and technical literature of rehabilitation, and it bespeaks a deeply held assumption of the innate and ineradicable difference—the essential inferiority—of those of us who are blind.

Here, for a similar example, is Irwin M. Siegel, M.D., speaking on “The Biomechanics of Posture” in a symposium on Parameters of Posture and Mobility in the Blind, held at the Illinois Visually Handicapped Institute not long ago. “Much postural divergency,” Dr. Siegel says, “is particular to the fact of blindness.” What he means by that is—but let him say it in his own words: “A rapidly growing blind child is awkward in his movements because he has a poor discriminative appreciation of spatial relationship and is, therefore, totally oblivious of grossly faulty posture. He does not have the vocabulary or the experience.”⁸

Now, let us play a little trick on Dr. Siegel. Let us repeat his statement, word for word, but with one slight change. Let us leave out the word “blind.” Now, the statement reads: “A rapidly growing child is awkward in his movements because he has a poor discriminative appreciation of spatial relationship and is, therefore, totally oblivious of grossly faulty posture. He does not have the vocabulary or the experience.” I ask you, is that statement any less acceptable—any less factual or plausible—than the original, which referred exclusively to the blind child? If you agree with me that it is not, then I have made my central point: It is not only *beauty* that is in the eye of the beholder; it is also *inferiority*.

We are not yet through with Dr. Siegel and his syndrome of postural divergency on the part of the blind. “Some of the problems commonly seen,” he says on the same page, “are as follows: (1) Dorsal round back (kyphosis), often due to a structural problem that cannot be helped by exercise. Sometimes bracing may be necessary. (2) Twisted back (scoliosis), yet another structural problem which may occasionally require operative correction. (3) Flat feet, often correctible through proper foot wear.”⁹

Now, let me just say about all this that it is not only nonsense but dangerous nonsense. In its correlation of blindness with flat feet, twisted back, and round back, the statement takes leave of all scientific sense and sanity and enters the realm of superstition. It may be that some people who are blind have flat feet; many, very many, do not, and never have had. It may be that some people who were raised in Canada have round back or twisted back; that does not make it a “Canadian condition.” To say that *blind* people have flat feet, or that fast-growing *blind* children (not just children) are awkward in their movements, is to imply a cause-effect relationship in which blindness is the cause of a host of secondary disabilities and problems. It never ceases to amaze me that would-be scientists, when they are in pursuit of a generalization or a federal grant, can be more unscientific and downright stupid than ordinary, illogical laymen. In other words, as far as I am concerned, Dr. Siegel has not caught the blind flat-footed, even if he should happen to have dorsal round back.

It is surely the case that the main trouble with the treatment of blind people is not that we have been overlooked but that we have been *overseen*. We have been over-surveyed, over-classified, and over-studied, as well as overprotected. We have been subjected both to

intensive examination and to extensive treatment. We have been aided and comforted, attended and supervised, virtually from cradle to grave. We have been transformed from people into clients, and from clients into patients; and, as I have already said, we are tired of it and intend to put a stop to it. Let those who resent this make the most of it. After all, it is our lives that are involved, and we mean to act accordingly.

Is it any wonder, in view of these prejudices and misconceptions on the part of self-proclaimed "professionals," that the general public should be confused and undecided in its attitudes toward blindness? The extent of this confusion is documented every day in terms of wild attributions, arbitrary exclusions, and discriminatory practices directed against blind persons. Recently in Iowa, for example, the head of the State university's Institute of Agricultural Medicine made headlines with a dire warning about the results of the misuse of ammonia as a farm fertilizer:

"We're greatly concerned," he said, "with ammonia accidents because the penalty for a mistake could be so severe—blindness. How can a farmer farm without eyesight? We're concerned with all kinds of agricultural accidents . . . but even if a farmer loses a finger in a machine accident he can still farm, but not if he's blind."¹⁰

So said the university official. Such statements help us keep perspective. With all the massive publicity we have carried on in Iowa—radio, television, newspaper, public speaking, and the rest—a prominent spokesman of our State University can unqualifiedly declare (and the newspapers are willing to print his declaration without editorial challenge) that a blind person cannot farm. Yet, there are many blind farmers throughout the nation. Several of them are in the State of Iowa. One of them (totally blind and quite successful) is a member of the policy board of the Iowa Commission for the Blind. He is in the audience tonight.

As this episode suggests, great reinforcement of negative images and superstitions concerning blindness comes from the popular mass media of communication—the press, TV, radio, movies, even comic strips and comic books. As a vivid example in the latter domain, a recent issue of *BATMAN* grossly exploited public doubts and fears about the blind, disguising an army of "crooks" as blind men—complete with tin cups, pencils, heavy wooden canes, dark glasses, and signs reading, *I AM BLIND*. Upon first discovering these hoods tap-tapping along the sidewalk, Batman exclaims to his sidekick: "Odd, Robin! So many blind men out this late after midnight. . . . Almost looks like they're holding a convention in town!" "Not odd at all, Batman," replies Robin. "They are! The 'U.S. Sightless Society' is meeting here in Gotham." "Then," says Batman, "it's *doubly* odd!" At which point the text reads: "What has Batman noticed that escapes even the trained eyes of his veteran junior aide, Robin? And possibly you reader?" What do you suppose it is? Simple. In Batman's words: "Why would a convention of 'sightless' persons be out on the town—*sightseeing*?" They couldn't be, of course; so they must be fakes and crooks. Now I wonder what that makes of you and me? And what does it make of our own "U.S. Sightless Society"—the National Federation of the Blind? We, too, have tours, and some of us (I suppose) are fakes and crooks; but the two things are not necessarily related.

A short time ago tragedy struck a famous personage who is near and dear to us all—the great detective of the comic page, Dick Tracy. He was totally blinded (or so we were led to believe) by a fire which consumed his home and left only Tess Trueheart intact and able-bodied. What happened to Tracy was what happens to blind people almost invariably in fiction and the funnies: He dropped out of all public activity (“A blind detective?” hooted the chief of police: “Don’t make me laugh!”), and Tracy took to shuffling about the city with dark glasses and an old-fashioned, heavy cane, accompanied in every drawing by the words “tap-tap.” There was much weeping and wailing down at the police station and great celebration among the criminal element—until one day, a few weeks later, it was revealed that his blindness was only a hoax; and Dick Tracy could emerge from darkness and oblivion and once again take up his career as the scourge of the underworld. The comic strip had not only sentimentalized his blindness but had fictionalized and melodramatized it as well, playing on the ancient myth and exploiting it for all it was worth.

Insulting and humiliating as all these items from the professional literature and the mass media are, they might be tolerated except for the fact that they translate into acts of discrimination against individual blind persons and into second-class citizenship for all of us who are blind. This is what I have repeatedly tried so unsuccessfully to communicate to the members of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped. It is what other minority groups have said concerning their problems to government and the public at large. Harriet Beecher Stowe, for instance, could not write “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” today, nor could Amos ‘n’ Andy find a radio audience in the present climate of public opinion. The reason is obvious, and we as blind persons must understand that reason thoroughly and act accordingly.

Let me give you an example, a very recent example, of what happens to blind people in the climate of public opinion which permits the sort of professional literature and popular comics we have been discussing.

My example is drawn from correspondence which took place not long ago between a blind college student and a college administrator. The story began when Pat Wright, a scholarship winner at Occidental College in California, made application, along with two of her sighted classmates, to transfer to Howard University as an exchange student. It should be borne in mind as the narrative unfolds, that Howard is regarded by many as the nation’s foremost black college with a high reputation for courage and leadership in the struggle for civil rights.

In his formal reply to the application of the three Occidental College students, Howard’s Vice-President for Student Affairs indicated his acceptance of the two sighted applicants and went on to state: “I do have reservations with respect to Miss Pat Wright, the young lady who is blind. Given the nature of racial conflicts and concerns operative today, I would strongly advise against Miss Wright’s coming to Howard. Many people today are extremely insensitive and bent on causing problems for others. It is my feeling that Miss Wright would find the experience to be less than rewarding.”

There you have the logical result of the attitudes inherent in the professional literature and the comics. Miss Wright, the so-called "young lady who is blind," brought the matter into focus in her letter of reply:

"In examining your most polite and proper refusal," she wrote, "I find that without doubt your rejection of me is discriminatory, infringing upon my human right to live in the world in a place and manner of my own choosing. . . . I resent most strongly the prejudicial implications of that statement. You seem to be operating under stereotyped notions that people who are blind are by nature passive, incapable of adapting to new situations; inadequate to handle emergencies; physically immobile; physically incapable of functioning 'normally' in the 'sighted world;' and particularly vulnerable to the physical, verbal, and emotional abuses of 'normal' people."

There is more to Miss Wright's reply—including a reference to the apparent likelihood that she was being discriminated against on grounds of race and sex as well as of blindness. As it turns out, that was unfair; for in a second letter addressed to her, the university administrator took pains to point out that no such multiple prejudice or discrimination was intended. "I regret," he wrote, "that your interpretation of my letter was so at variance with its intent and wish to assure you that my decision was based largely on the absence of any special facilities and services in any campus building, for the blind, and not because of your race or sex. I would make the same decision in the case of a black, male applicant."

There it is again. There is no consciousness whatever of any prejudice or discrimination in this act of blunt rejection. The applicant for admission, it is clear, might be almost anything or anybody, and still be quite acceptable—anybody, that is, other than a blind person, whose condition allegedly necessitates "special facilities and services."

I have chosen this particular illustration, out of many similar cases which turn up every year, because it is especially rich in irony. What would this black official of a black university make, one wonders, of a rejection issued to a black applicant by any school on grounds that there were no special facilities or services available for students with black skins? He would, of course, cry "Jim Crow." He would protest that segregation and separate treatment are relics of a bygone prejudiced past, violating alike civil rights and constitutional commands.

As with the professional literature and the mass media, so with Pat Wright. The story is typical, not unique. Variations of her experience are enacted hundreds of times every day throughout the nation. Not only do they occur in major events but in the small incidents so familiar to us all. How often, when a blind person and a sighted person are together in a restaurant, does the waitress say: "Does he want cream in his coffee?" How often, in fact, (regardless of the setting) is the conversation concerning the needs, wishes, actions, or abilities of the blind person directed to a sighted associate, as if the blind person were not there at all? Of even more significance, how often does the blind person fail utterly to grasp the implications of the situation and show his conditioning to the stereotype by laughing at the whole thing, exhibiting his so-called "sense of humor?" It is not necessary to be deadly

serious and never smile, but fat people who make jokes about themselves for being fat or black people who poke fun at the Negro stereotypes are usually more pathetic than humorous. We as blind people should not be defensive or have chips on our shoulders. Neither should we fail to understand what these things really mean and what actions must be taken.

In the small incidents and the "gut" issues of existence the stereotype confronts us every day. It confronts us in the sheltered shops which pay subminimum wages; it confronts us in the agencies which fear the justice of our cause and seek to dismiss us as militants and radicals; it confronts us in the distortions and jargon of the professional journals; it confronts us in the colleges and universities which deny admission; it confronts us in the insurance companies which refuse equal coverage; it confronts us in the landlords who hesitate to rent; it confronts us in the factories and offices which find reasons for exclusion and denial; it confronts us in the pity we constantly receive from the general public; it confronts us in the pathetic pride of those blind individuals who try to shun other blind people and our movement and who say, "I am independent—I am uniquely talented—I am not like other blind people—I have made it on my own with sighted people;" and finally, it confronts us in the lack of self-respect and the scraping and bowing of those blind persons who fawn on the agencies and their sighted neighbors and who are ashamed of their blindness and behave like the "Uncle Toms" they are. It confronts us, in short, in all of the activities and aspirations which go to make up life itself.

By any standard one cares to set, the challenge is formidable. The government and private agencies, established to assist the blind, more often than not serve as stumbling blocks to keep us down and keep us out. The mass media, while well-intentioned and wishing to help, reinforce the worst and most destructive of the misconceptions. The American Council of the Blind, that small group of bitter dissidents who splintered away from our movement a decade ago, is widely regarded as nothing but a front for the worst of the agencies—a company union, and a force for disunity. The National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, the self-appointed custodian and keeper of the blind, is working diligently to gain power and respectability. Partly because of all these things and partly because of long-standing tradition, the thinking of the general public is still largely controlled by superstition, prejudice, and ignorance about what we are and what we hope to become.

This is the picture, but it is only part of the picture. All I have said is true; yet, the future has never looked as bright as it does today. The reason is simple. We the blind are organized, and on the move. We have faith in ourselves and belief in the justice of our cause, and we have the determination and the resources to translate our faith and belief into action and accomplishment. Above all, we have found (in the National Federation of the Blind) the unifying force, the vehicle for success.

I want to make it clear that we are not condemning all agencies doing work with the blind. Far from it. We would not be where we are today had it not been for the help and understanding of progressive agencies. As I have said many times before, such agencies have

nothing to fear from us. We work with them in partnership and harmony.

In fact, our purpose is not to condemn at all but to bring change—to be seen for what we are and heard with our own voice. The truth is as basic and elemental as this: We are simply no longer willing to live as second-class citizens. Regardless of the cost or hostility, we won't do it. If our choice is to have confrontation or to lie down and be walked on like rugs, then the choice is painful, but it is also inescapable. It must be confrontation.

In the struggle we do not stand alone. More and more of the blind are rallying to the cause, and many of the sighted are as dedicated to the movement as we are. An increasing number of the agencies are working with us, and there is noticeable improvement in the public attitude. Even so, the days ahead will be a time of serious challenge and conflict.

In stating our position perhaps we can do no better than paraphrase the words of William Lloyd Garrison, spoken over a century ago: We have determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float—till every chain be broken, and every blind person set free.

We are aware that many object to the severity of our language, but is there not cause for severity? We will be as harsh as the truth, and as uncompromising as justice. We are in earnest. We will not equivocate—We will not excuse—We will not retreat a single inch—And *we will be heard!*

This is the watchword and the message of the new generation, the new breed of the blind. It is the force of Federationism. It is the spirit of the movement. I say to every blind person who hears these words and to every sighted person who is truly a friend of the blind that the need is great and the time is now. The issues are drawn.

As I conclude, I am sure you know what question I will ask you. Think carefully and don't respond unless you mean it—unless you are willing to give of your time, your money, your strength, and your spirit. I ask you now, as I have done before: Will you join me on the barricades?

FOOTNOTES

1. Gloria R. Seamons, *Swimming for the Blind* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1966), pp. 1-3.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p 13

6. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Irwin M. Siegel, M.D., "The Biomechanics of Posture: Applications to Mobility in the Blind," *Parameters of Posture and Mobility in the Blind*, Illinois Visually Handicapped Institute and Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1969), p. 50.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Des Moines Sunday Register*, August 8, 1971, Section T, p. 1.

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THE JERNIGAN-TWINAME COLLOQUY

President Jernigan—When I talked with our next speaker earlier about attending our program, he assured me that he would be here. He not only said that, but that he would come the day before and attend our banquet, which, indeed he did. He said that he regarded attendance at this largest group of consumers of services to the blind meeting as important. Subsequently I know that he had to rearrange national television schedules in order to keep his commitment to us. [Applause] Last night I brought to his attention a variety of items as we sat and chatted at the banquet. I talked with him about the difference between the organization of the blind and organizations for the blind, between this movement and agencies. We had some very direct straight talk and he didn't react simply with defensiveness, he reacted positively.

I came away from that discussion with him feeling much encouraged as to the possibility of real, meaningful input from the organized blind movement to the Social and Rehabilitation Services, and I think that input is needed very badly if we're really to get good services to blind people in this country. I tell you all this to set the background and framework for the comments you are about to hear from our speaker, because for my money I think we have the best chance of having real cooperative relationships with that part of HEW which gives the services to blind people that we've ever had, and I take the appearance of this man here this morning as symbolic. With that I want to present to you to talk about Federal initiative in services to the blind, Mr. John D. Twiname who is the Administrator of

Social and Rehabilitation Services in Washington. [Applause]

Mr. Twiname—Thank you very much, Dr. Jernigan. I most appreciate being invited and at last to be able to meet with and more importantly, talk with, members and officers of this organization. As I said only briefly when invited to comment last night, the real contribution of my being here is to have listened to your president and to you and to catch a sense of the spirit of this group.

Pres. Jernigan—I only think it fair to warn you, Mr. Twiname, that what you're saying is being recorded and will be distributed widely throughout the country. I think it's not right for a man to be speaking and not know he's being recorded. [Much laughter and applause]

Mr. Twiname—You have a very astute politician as your leader. I sat next to him last night, and it gave us this chance for a long discussion which further amazed me because he was also the principal speaker; when I'm speaking I don't really want to talk to any body ahead of time. So I went back to the room and changed my speech after [laughter & applause] and perhaps some of my ideas.

It is a real lift, as I say, to catch the spirit, and a sense of commitment of this group. I don't think the Palmer House has been this alive in a long time. [Applause] And quite frankly, you talk about your sheltered workshops—you should see and spend some time in my office in Washington. I refer to it as my sheltered workshop because it really is too much isolated from the changing world of the consumer and of the provider of service and it's important to catch your message.

Perhaps this chance for dialogue will occur, and I'm open for it, because I am not a professional, in that sense, having come from the field, and I am not a consumer. But I am interested in the effectiveness of government; and especially in the effectiveness of government to deliver on its promises to people who have been excluded either systematically or discriminated against because of a minority status of one kind or another.

In the Social and Rehabilitation Services we are concerned with those minorities. But I will make a confession, after listening to the remarks last night, that I'm not a very good swimmer. [Laughter & applause] I'm therefore confident, however, that you will not suggest that all bureaucrats wear sponges on their heads! [Much laughter] And I can therefore freely confess some other things. One, that I can't talk to you about all Federal initiatives, and I won't this morning, as we have a limited time; therefore I'll confine myself to SRS. You know more than I do about many of these Federal initiatives and I commend you for your participation in them. The signing of the new higher education act and your work in getting the Section 904 into it, the civil service activities—things that have been brought forward already at this meeting. But I can, and I think I should, speak of the Social and Rehabilitation Services which your President referred to last year as I read *The Braille Monitor* as a pot of Mulligan stew. I wasn't sure in coming here whether I was going to talk about menus or be one of the ingredients! [Laughter] But the mission of the Social and Rehabilitation Services is mainly to work as partners and advocates with vulnerable and handicapped people and

families—aged, poor children, abused children, physically and mentally handicapped, and others—to enable each person to achieve equality of opportunity and to reach his maximum potential.

The rehabilitation spirit is our cornerstone. And, of course, I picked this up from my predecessor who hired me, Mary Switzer, and I picked it up in the course of reading the writings of your founder, Dr. tenBroek. As he wrote then, and this is what I began to pick up at this meeting and sense the importance of our policies, "The blind as a group are mentally competent, psychologically stable and socially adaptable. And their needs are therefore those of ordinary people [applause] of normal men and women caught at a physical and social disadvantage and this proposition implies," he went on to say, "that the blind, like other persons have a need for shelter, but not a need to be sheltered; a need for adjustment and acceptance, but not a need for toleration or patronage. And more specifically" which comes to the philosophy I want and we want for SRS, "it affirms the capacity of the blind for self-reliance and self-determination, for full participation in the affairs of society, and active competition in the regular channels of economic opportunity." This is a statement that reflects what I hope will be an undergirding SRS philosophy toward all handicapped persons and to the blind. [Applause]

I believe you are helping us lift public, and professional, and our own governmental, understanding of what is normal and what is myth, what is possible and what is paternalistic. And you help not only your own group, but others who suffer the social put-downs as well. And

we need more boldness to speak out on these matters. But it's difficult for us in government, as it is for you, and it will be in the road ahead, to see the necessity, as we mature, to affirm more control by blind persons over their lives and the policies which affect their lives toward this maximization of self-sufficiency. At the same time we must not bypass the special needs and special help required by multiply handicapped blind persons, the person who is disadvantaged by growing up in a poverty culture, who is disadvantaged by racial discrimination, or by age, or by other handicaps. So while we must help all handicapped people help themselves at all points in the spectrum of human capacity, our special support in the Social and Rehabilitation Services must often be directed to those most severely handicapped. And I hope we can distinguish the special needs along the spectrum. Our progress in the past, as I have studied or observed it, has carried the errors of too little faith in what could be done, and even now we're still guilty. For example, in another field, equal employment opportunity, we have upward mobility programs, but we put people in them who ought to be accepted for higher jobs right now without going through the special upward mobility programs. So we miss our mark even as we begin to try to work and progress in this area. . . .

But there are many changes in the wind which give us opportunity for the new generation of blind people to seize new ground. I won't speak of all Federal initiatives as I've said. Your representatives, and John Nagle, who is a very active and able one who presses us and is alive and well in Washington, we hear from him a lot, he's covered most of these. The President had set in a State of

the Union message a few years ago, some great goals for the nation. And he has others, and three of them in particular are revolutionary in nature with a special impact on the blind, and the Social and Rehabilitation Services is right in the middle. These three reforms are encompassed in the goals for reform of the health maintenance system, so-called, our health delivery system. Secondly, an income maintenance or welfare reform was discussed in the previous agenda item. And perhaps the most complex of all is the reform of the social services system or non-system in our country. Briefly I can't go into the health delivery system in all of its needs, but our hope is toward the National Health Insurance Act in which, depending on which one will be passed, we inevitably will have something more comprehensive that will affect favorably all of SRS' target groups; but for blind persons, and particularly because of its relationship with rehabilitation, that we can release more funds for the rehabilitation program that will not have to be spent on special medical care or related services, that could be covered by a new and better health program. The second major reform, is the President's initiative in the income maintenance field which strikes at the heart of our basic welfare program that has become such a mess over the past years and most especially in the last few. Those items were covered for you by Mr. Nagle and Mr. Sundquist before. But I want to pay special tribute to the National Federation for an essential bit of philosophy which has been in the program for the blind--the work incentive idea--which the President has really adopted to permeate all of the welfare reform initiative; the idea for a work incentive, a disregard of income to give somebody not a penalty for going to

work but a reward. [Applause] I think these ideas rank among the Federation's major contributions to current social policy and I would say, and it's an interesting footnote, one of my associates in the department who has perhaps the best mastery and one of the greatest influences in the shaping of the law, is a person who is totally blind. He has mastered it and knows how to, and he has used it. His name is Tom Joe and he's a staff person, an assistant to the undersecretary, you know him. . . . If we can get it through and I am hopeful we would be able to raise the standard for aid to the blind in thirty-four States and provide this national uniform kind of a minimum income, a simplified eligibility, a Federal administration under the Social Security Administration to tie in with the other disability programs that were discussed earlier. These would lend dignity, simplicity, provide a uniformity, and a new equity that people in need, low-income blind people, have long deserved, and other handicapped as well.

Now packed into the welfare reform bill are new ties to services, particularly in vocational rehabilitation, with the expectation that everyone who gets a supplement or an income maintenance payment would have immediate access to VR services. Those services would be mandated and there would be a direct tie that there has never been before. We could begin to develop a uniform coherence by having the rehabilitation agency determine the disability not only for the regular social security disability, but for disability under the welfare programs as well, rather than the way in which they're now done, although this might be done in many states by agencies for the blind. In some cases this is being done right now, but this

would make a national standard approach. The Social Services, however, which not only grew out of this bill, but other reforms that we are trying to do administratively, is the third one that I would speak to. It is quite complex, a catalyst for change in social services. . . .

We are now moving administratively to separate the administration and the delivery of social services from what is commonly thought of as welfare, and what has become stigmatized as welfare, in order that the social services will in fact become some social services. Whatever these social services have been in welfare they have been almost non-existent for blind people. The separation would provide a service agency or a base for case management—an ombudsman comparable in some ways to the rehabilitation counselor—as they may be needed. We may be able to develop services for a number of groups. Of course we've had a good forerunner over many years in agencies for the blind as to how to provide these services. Yet, for many people, and still for many blind people, services are fragmented. In one system you're a client, and in another you're a patient, and here you're a recipient. Bouncing from one agency to another, many people in greatest need fall between the cracks. That's why we've talked, and you'll be hearing over the next decade much more about services integration, to get various services assembled more comprehensively, more coherently, so that various agencies are interacting to make a more comprehensive service system. Now agencies for the blind have long known and innovated in the direction of comprehensiveness and the integration of services. But they would be the first to admit that they cannot fill all the needs of

blind persons. And they shouldn't, because when one agency is the specialty for the blind who look to it to provide all the services, it gets other agencies off the hook. They can issue a disclaimer about their responsibility to serve blind people. We don't want that, especially when we look at the other institutions and agencies to which blind people should have access and service, whether it's in schools, health centers, senior citizens' centers, child guidance clinics, and all the rest. The needs of blind people should be met and access must become an equal right in these institutions and in these agencies as well as for sighted people. [Applause]

As we see it, sometimes these social services in these agencies can be facilitated by outstationing a representative from the agency for the blind. Whichever way it's done, the result of services integration should be the enhancement of the specialized services of the agencies for the blind but also wide availability of services from others. We want the best from both worlds. The reason we have a great opportunity to forge new ground here is because of the tremendous new priorities the administration over the past three years with the Congress has provided in the rearrangement of national priorities. In 1969 the Defense Budget was 45 percent of the National Budget; Human Resources programs were about 32 percent. In three years this has been exactly reversed, so that the Human Resources investments now constitute 45 percent of the National Federal Budget and Defense and military spending is at 32 percent. This is a healthy trend and we hope it can continue because the resources we need are far limited even now, as we realize from our own expectation of what the real need is.

It is a very sobering thing that we have to take into account. But we now look forward to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments in this special partnership and integration of services. You're aware that there are new titles, one of which provides services to severely disabled people who may not necessarily have a vocational outcome. Now this is significant, because we've needed services for older blind persons, for example, or the mentally retarded. But we shouldn't depend on this in the Vocational Rehabilitation Act with an authorization even as small as thirty million dollars, because we have to look to where the other resources are available and learn how to capitalize on it. In the last three years the Federal Government has added over a billion new dollars into social services support, but needy blind people have not gotten their share of these resources; and agencies who can serve the blind have not used these resources, and I don't think that that is fair, or smart, and it must be corrected. [Applause]

What I am saying is this; that it is important that agencies for the blind and rehabilitation agencies draw on these and other resources such as the Older Americans Act with 200 million new dollars being appropriated and 100 million dollars for nutrition programs. Older blind people should get their share of that program and they could be administered by an agency for the blind or a voluntary or private agency. Well somebody said last night, "Go, Man, Go," that's what I'm talking about. I think in spite of past failures of policy, these funds can be channeled.

If the State umbrella agencies over which there is much controversy--and I

know the feeling in this body—if the umbrella agencies and the State have a function in more closely tying these together, it is to produce the synergistic effect. This produces a reinforcing effect between agencies, and gives assignments to those who can provide the special services and the resources from various authorities, freeing an agency from its own dependency on one act, on one law, on one appropriation, much like the taking of risks. Agencies must do as individuals do, beyond the protection of one dependent relationship. The corollary to this predicted development is greater access by the consumer. The President, has in speaking of his decentralization policy in government, struck a real chord, echoed by more radical groups when they yell "Power to the People." Because that is best done when the power to change, to design services, is decentralized where people can get at them, and this is why we've proposed the Allied Services Act. What it seeks to do is to emphasize planning at the local level, around target group needs, looking at the needs, finding what needs to be done, and then looking at what agencies and resources are available. Then in putting them together they can be encouraged by the Federal Government, rather than to have us keep putting up barriers to this kind of sensible planning through regulations and other bureaucratic obstacles, which makes things so fragmented at the other end.

So in our part, what we're trying to do now, before we get the kind of consumer boards and involvement at local service areas, is to try to get into our regional offices, through decentralizing of them, more input not only from providing agencies but consumer groups. [Applause] This is why we have established this

National Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Handicapped in SRS. It was a beginning to pull together the various interests so that we could, in our planning, begin to open up our system for debate, for input, for an ability to be more up with the times and not be pulled kicking and screaming along, as ideas change and as policies need to be refined. This is what we hope for our Office of the Blind and Visually Handicapped in SRS, in which we look not to it, not as we used to call it a Division in Rehabilitation Services Administration, a division of the rehabilitation program. By calling it an Office what we're really looking for is that it speaks as an advocate to all our programs, not just one rehabilitation program but the policies under social services, funds, medicaid, and for that matter, beyond in the Department of HEW. And I think we can learn how to make of that office an advocate agency that will begin to shape policies, that will pull some of these disparate programs together and make the policies more consistent. At least this is my hope, and with your support we can make it a stronger voice inside the Federal government. [Applause]

I will not go into the particulars of the initiatives that we hope to take in specific ways for the blind in the immediate year or years ahead. We'll leave that for another session. I want to have some time for questions. I think what I'll do in order not to make a windup, Mr. President, is to just stop for a moment here, before a conclusion, and ask to give a chance for people to register protest, or ask questions or whatever.

Pres. Jernigan--No, not yet, Mr. Twiname. When you get through, then I

want to take the chair back and direct questions to you.

Mr. Twiname—Why don't I just sit down and you take the chair now;

Pres. Jernigan—Fine. Now, Mr. Twiname, the chair wishes first to address a question to you and we can talk back and forth to each other. Want to see if that mike's on?

Mr. Twiname—I think it's fine. . . .

Pres. Jernigan—Mr. Twiname, I wish to address one or two questions to you. I first wish to make a comment, we feel, in this organization concern in two or three broad areas. As I indicated to you I'm going to ask you in a minute to make response concerning these matters. First, we're concerned that services for the blind not be so enmeshed in services to everybody else that the special needs of the blind get lost under the umbrella. [Cheers and applause] Second, we do not believe that the answer to the problems we've had with present services is simply a lot more of the same kind of services because some of them haven't really given service. And third, we're concerned with some means whereby we can have real input to your office. Now I recognize that you have to deal with lots of groups, and I recognize that you can't take all your time dealing with problems of the blind and particularly listening to the consumers of services. But you have a vast input to you from the organization of State directors. I know because I am a State director. I usually delegate somebody else to go to those meetings and I do because usually, and I don't want to sound the wrong way about it, but usually they talk very learnedly about stuff that mostly I think is

not particularly relevant to what I'm trying to do, at least in services to the blind. So I usually delegate, because I don't think you dare leave those guys unwatched. . . .

We want some means whereby we have direct input to you when we've got something to say, and we'll try to say it courteously, and we'll try to say it briefly, so as not to take up your time, but we want some way to get some input. The National Advisory Committee which was set up, as I indicated to you last night, as far as we're concerned is made up of three kinds of people—one, you've got the people who are representative of the agencies doing work for the blind, and I want to make it very clear, they're not our representatives: [cheers and applause] and if they say that they represent the blind, or anybody else says that they represent the blind, then I just don't think he's talking about what we're talking about. The second group is unaligned blind people, blind people who don't represent anyone but themselves; blind people who supposedly have been successful in their own communities. . . . They're safe, you see for the agencies, because they don't represent constituencies. Usually they're not knowledgeable. They feel flattered to be put on a committee and especially if it's called a national committee, they go there and they silently nod their heads. Nobody can accuse them of being pawns as they've been very successful in their own communities and businesses, . . . They are window dressing. [Applause] Now in addition to that, you have some token representation of the organized blind movement. I'm not saying to you that that particular advisory committee ought to be dominated by the organized blind movement. I'd be happy if it were,

but I don't think we can get that. I am saying to you though that representation ought to be more than tokenism and that there ought to be some way for us to get feed in to you when we really have something to say, and that there ought to be some mechanism for doing that. Now I have made you in a sense a counter-speech, so I want now to reduce what I've said to some very specific questions. Can you think of a way, that you are today prepared to recommend and commit yourself to following, whereby we can get feed in to you directly at reasonable times with reasonable problems. . . .

Mr. Twine--Well, tying back to what you said earlier, sure, things are busy for you, and for me, and for everybody. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't make a very significant piece of that time for the kind of dialogue around policy and ideas, especially with consumer groups, which I think we have had too little. Therefore, really the best mechanism I can think of for this input is to pick up the telephone. And I invite you, Mr. President, when you do have something on your mind that you think is at the level of significance at which it would be appropriate for me to deal and to become knowledgeable about, to meet any time, I would be glad to sit down and get our other people who are responsible for the service areas together with us. I just want that kind of an open door policy to be extended here to this group publicly, so that you just take advantage of it and let's try it as you want to. [Applause]

Pres. Jernigan--Now, am I to understand that what you're saying is, that if I call you and say we have a problem and we want to discuss it with you,

assuming I don't do that every day, but that it's at reasonable times and about reasonable matters, if I call you and say that we've got a problem and that we want to discuss it with you, are you saying then that you personally will meet with us and talk about it?

Mr. Twine--Yes, I would be delighted to do it; and the only caveat that I say is that I do want to not undermine in any way the responsibility that should be exercised by our Office for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, by our Commissioner for Rehabilitation, but I do feel that I need to personally be involved in order to get an unfiltered knowledge of what some of the issues are. [Shouts, cheers, applause]

Pres. Jernigan--But, now Mr. Twine, let me pursue it just this much further. We've tried going to the head of the Office for the Blind, and I don't mean to make any disparaging comments about him, he's a fine man, but that doesn't work very well, and I want to know if what I'm understanding is correct that I don't care if he's there, and I don't care if the head of rehabilitation services is there, I want to know if we can talk to you.

Mr. Twine--Well, I think that if you find as you pursue routine business with our Office of the Blind, or any other office, we've got to start at the regional office for that matter, if it's a regional problem, if you don't get satisfaction and you think a reasonable appeal is necessary, that of course is appropriate; and that's why I want to make myself available. For that matter, if it becomes of that kind of significance I would lobby with you to make the Secretary available, so we could talk about things.

Pres. Jernigan--What I'm really saying is this: We get enmeshed in Federal layers and hierarchies. We could go tomorrow and talk to the head of the Office for the Blind and he'd be polite and we'd come away with a nice chatsy chat and it wouldn't mean one thing. I know that, and everybody in this room knows that, and I don't know whether you know that, but that's the way it is. [Applause] Now he's a nice guy, and what I'm saying is not that we bring every problem to you, but I'm saying that I want some assurance, and I hope I have that, that from time to time we can meet with you directly and talk with you, since you are the head of this outfit, without having to get all involved in fifteen layers below you. Now that doesn't mean with every problem, but it means from time to time. You have an advisory committee, and we've told you we don't think it's representative of our interests, despite the fact that it claims to be, and we want some mechanism whereby we can talk with you from time to time directly. That's all.

Mr. Twiname--You have my assurance. [Applause]

Pres. Jernigan--I want to leave that topic and go to another one. I don't know whether you are familiar with our continuing problem with the National Accreditation Council concerning services for the blind and visually handicapped. We believe that that group is undemocratically structured, that it is destructive as it's now structured, that it's not at all progressive. We believe that the action of the State Rehabilitation Directors in saying that they would purchase no services unless somebody was from an agency or organization accredited by NAC--the National Accreditation Council of

Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped--we believe all that is bad. Your department has been largely financing the operation of NAC, you and the American Foundation for the Blind. You have been giving them about \$80,000 a year and so has the American Foundation. It's a long story as to the history and development of this organization. . . .

I would like to say to you that we intend to begin to step up our activities very sharply to see if we can either change NAC or destroy it [cheers and applause]. We don't regard that as negative. We don't wish to have conflict, especially with the attitude you've brought here today, and we appreciate that attitude. I want to know, and I think I indicated to you in the letter ahead of time that I would be talking with you some about this, I want to know if you can make any comments to us concerning NAC, or if you're familiar enough with it. If you can't make any, if you will try to learn something about it. In other words I want to know what your feelings are on that score.

Mr. Twiname--Well, I think you're right on the second count, I am not personally enough familiar with the activities of NAC. My own knowledge is that it is a controversial subject. It is apparent from my brief look at it, when I became aware of your concern, that it doesn't have the consumer representation. [wild applause] But in any event, I'll say the one additional thing that it is important, it seems to me, in most of the fields we work, to develop standards and define ways of enforcement or incentives to meet those standards that aren't stifling and not just the putting in concrete something that becomes outdated.

Pres. Jernigan--Are you aware of the fact, Mr. Twiname, that at its meeting in December, blind people went and asked to be admitted as observers, and that NAC always holds its meetings behind closed doors, and even for that matter keeps the list of its members confidential? Are you aware of the fact that at the meetings the blind asked that they have only two observers who'd sit in and be silent and pledge not to say a word and that they were turned away and refused admittance?

Mr. Twiname--Well, I think this is the pledge I should give on this, and obviously you feel it's important that I would pledge our offices at least not to dominate it. It is a private group, although as you say it has had Federal financing and therefore, I would like to work with you and them towards any reforms that would seem appropriate and reasonable. I want to say that I recognize the emotional nature of these things. I am primarily responsible right now in the Federal Government for the upgrading of nursing homes in the country and the medicaid program, and I'll tell you it's a tough business between providers and consumers to get us from here to where we want to be. That is going to be a struggle along the way as I imagine a struggle is reflected in this particular issue. I wouldn't want to turn from the struggle and therefore I'd like to work with you about it.

Pres. Jernigan--What I'm going to say to you on that score is this: We're going to send you our August *Monitor* which will be entirely taken up with NAC. It will give an account of what occurred at that December meeting and of something of the structure of NAC. I hope you'll find time to look at that, and then one day in the not too distant future, we would

request to sit down and talk with you for a few minutes about NAC, after you've had time to look at it. I recognize that that will take you some time.

Mr. Twiname--I'll do it.[Applause]

Pres. Jernigan--All right. He says he'll do it. The final question which the Chair wishes to put to you deals with the first two points I made in that beginning statement of mine--that is, that we are concerned that services for the blind not be lumped in with all other services under an overall umbrella. Sometimes we've felt from the Federal department, pressures on the States to combine their programs for the blind, particularly rehabilitation programs, with other services programs into one kind of overall amalgam. Would you care to comment on your views about separate agencies for the blind as opposed to the umbrella type agency?

Mr. Twiname--Well, this knowing your feeling about it, and wanting to be straightforward, is the reason I spoke in my informal but prepared remarks about integration of services. And I think it is necessary for us to have agencies with separate service skills and separate authorities to be able to be more interdependent. People talk about the declaration of interdependence and I think that this is necessary more for agencies today at the State and the Federal level. This does not mean when we have mechanisms administratively for knocking agency heads together--and this is really what it comes down to--they cannot be operating separately, each one reporting to the Governor or, in the case of HEW, each agency reporting to the Secretary. Because in most States and in HEW to report to the Governor or the Secretary is to report

to no one because there is no way to have any effective management control, just to knock the heads of agencies, and I say that in deep respect to Mr. Jernigan—I recognize you're an agency head—because--

Pres. Jernigan--Not in spirit.
[Laughter]

Mr. Twine--You've got to have some kind of umbrella agencies, but that does not mean that you flush all of the agencies and the professionals and the nonprofessionals and employees and services all together in an amalgam where you cannot distinguish the specialized service providers and specialized agencies. Therefore, I want to be very clear that I think agencies for the blind have a very special and important mission. They should be preserved and enhanced in that mission but that can be done at the same time that the integration of service provision with those services provided with other agencies can go forward together.

Pres. Jernigan--Mr. Twine, the problem that sometimes happens is exemplified by this. When you get different agencies or different concerns, lumped under one head or one administrative mechanism, very often the larger group dominates in the planning and in the orientation, and very often the time of everybody is wasted going through the formalities of pretending that there are common concerns. There isn't time, obviously, to give you the whole story on this, but a good example of that is a conference to which I was called in Kansas City shortly after SRS became SRS and combined all the services. They called in from several States, the representatives from crippled children, and welfare of

various kinds, mental health, services for the blind, rehabilitation for the blind, general rehabilitation, they had all kinds of groups.

And so we got down there, eighty of us, in that fine room, and we began to talk about the things that were of common concern to our agencies. Well, I made myself moderately unpopular on two topics and shut up after that. The comments were brief, they weren't meant to be that caustic. The first question that came up that I made a comment about was that they wanted to discuss the question of whether the unmarried mother constituted a rehabilitation problem. Now, I said, I don't know whether she does or not, but if she's blind, we're going to give her service. [Applause] My comment was less than graciously received, and so I shut up. They spent half an hour talking on that and I felt that it was a waste of my time because you see, to some of them that was probably a topic of great concern. Well, then they spent a great deal more time debating the question, what is rehabilitation? I ventured again to make another comment, and I said I don't know what it is, but if a guy's blind, we're going to give him service. And I think they thought we had a one track mind or that I did, and so I shut up and said no more during that conference. Now this is the kind of thing that gives me concern, when we get all these groups together each one's got to have its say and they talk about things that really have not much relationship to some of the services to the blind and some of the other areas, as we see it anyway.

Mr. Twine--I suppose speaking on this, Dr. Jernigan, is like trying to comment on whether Mayor Daley ought

to be represented at the Democratic Convention.

Pres. Jernigan--Depends on who you're for.

Mr. Twiname--It's a little bit hard to come out ahead, but the reason that I think this is important and perhaps if you take this--I'll speak frankly of my feeling about it. That in some ways the various minority groups of physically and mentally handicapped groups can constitute a very great, a large minority and in some cases even a majority, in many situations. Why I think we have to hang together and that these kinds of relationships, such as symbolized in the meeting you describe, are really important to us because the leadership of the blind, of the agencies for the blind, the whole movement of the blind, speaks so much and so directly to the problems of some of the other handicapped. The deaf, who are a smaller minority, really need your leadership and help and the extension of your hand in helping to solve and address problems which have very direct counterparts and corollaries in the work you've already done, and the victories you've won, and the things you're accomplishing. Therefore, I'm against the segregation of blind persons and their agencies and their services from the discussions and the disciplines that relate to other handicapped groups and other agencies. And I speak frankly on it because we need your leadership, because if one minority group of handicapped people or other are left to their own devices without our hand, I think we're all going to be the weaker for it in our society. [Applause]

Pres. Jernigan--We won't have time to

pursue this, and pretty soon, I've got to get some questions from some other people. I'm glad to see us be of help to other groups but I'm not glad to see us take the time of people who ought to be giving services to the blind to deal with irrelevant matters in programs that are structured in ways that really are counterproductive to what we're trying to do. [Applause] All right, let's throw this open to questions from the floor.

....

Mr. Twiname--I think perhaps it is best for both of us that we take advantage of the first point and continue this dialogue on the other occasions which your President and representatives will set up. There are so many other questions I would like to hear your views on. I think that your input will make a difference in the question of research and demonstration, for example, because we are in the position of trying to develop plans and strategies of what is really needed. You know what is needed and, therefore, I would like to hear from you and not just the people who do the research. So we'll continue this dialogue. In short, I want to say that we cannot substitute for you but we really would like to join you at the barricades in a partnership, and I think together we can touch the conscience of this country, we can tap the skills of our society and we can turn on the American ingenuity to forge the creative kind of justice that will give all men and women, blind and sighted, a real opportunity to reach their life's potential in this country. It's a pleasure to join you in that work. [Prolonged cheers and applause]

Pres. Jernigan--Mr. Twiname, you can

see from the response of the audience that we not only appreciate your presence but we appreciate the spirit in which you've come.

* * * * *

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by

John Nagle

Chief of the Washington Office
National Federation of the Blind

DISABILITY INSURANCE FOR THE BLIND

On the opening day of the first session of the 92nd Congress, the Honorable Wilbur D. Mills, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, House of Representatives, introduced H. R. 1, the Social Security Amendments of 1972.

When H. R. 1 passed the House in June, 1971, it did not contain H. R. 1240, introduced by Congressman James A. Burke, the Federation's Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill that would make it possible for a blind person who has worked a year and one-half in Social Security-covered work to draw disability insurance benefits so long as he remains blind and regardless of his earnings

H. R. 1 did, however, contain provisions liberalizing eligibility for disability payments requirements for blind persons, by providing that qualifications may be established for benefits if blind persons have worked at Social Security-covered employment for a total of twenty quarters and worked them since the beginning of the program rather than during the ten years prior to the occurrence of the disability of blindness. Evidence

that this is a Federation proposal incorporated in H. R. 1 is shown in the Committee Report where sentences from NFB testimony are used intact in the discussion of this section.

Early in the second session of the 92nd Congress, the Senate Finance Committee held public hearings on H. R. 1.

The NFB appeared before the Committee and presented testimony in support of S. 1335, introduced by Senator Vance Hartke, joined by seventy cosponsoring colleagues.

S. 1335, the NFB-Hartke Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill before the Senate, was adopted on March 2, 1972, by the Finance Committee as an amendment to H. R. 1.

Late in June, H. R. 1 was reported out of Committee and is expected on the Senate floor for consideration in the fall.

Finally, when H. R. 1 has been approved by the Senate with its Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill provisions—the fifth time our disability bill will have passed the Senate—there will be a House-Senate Conference to work out differences.

And since the chief proponent of our Disability Insurance for the Blind Bill in the House, Congressman James A. Burke, will be one of the House conferees, Federationists can well hope that this is the year that this measure which has such a tremendous potential for good for so many blind people will finally go all the way and become public law.

OTHER PROVISIONS OF H. R. 1

The massive welfare reform package went to the floor of the Senate from its Finance Committee on June 13th. No vote is expected until after the National Democratic and Republican Conventions. The Social Security increases were split off the Welfare Reform bill as a result of Senator Frank Church's amendment to the national debt ceiling bill, containing a twenty per cent increase in Social Security benefits, effective with the month of September and which will be reflected in the checks received on October 3rd. The Church amendment was signed by the President on July 1st and also contains provision for an automatic increase in Social Security benefits if a three percent increase in the cost of living index or higher occurs each year, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

The House originally passed H. R. 1 in June of 1971. The big issue between the House and Senate versions of the bill is the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and aid for the so-called working poor. The Finance Committee flatly rejected the President's \$2,400 a year guaranteed minimum for a family of four and payments to the working poor. The Committee substituted its own "workfare" plan with strict work requirements for many adults now receiving AFDC.

Both the Senate and the House agree on the following: a widow or a widower would be entitled to a benefit equal to 100 percent of the amount the deceased spouse would have received if he were still living; the amount that a social security beneficiary could earn under age 72 and still be paid full benefits would be

increased from the present \$1,680 to \$2,000 a year; health insurance benefits under medicare would be extended to persons entitled to disability insurance benefits after they have been entitled to such benefits for at least two years; and the Secretary of HEW could impose fee schedules for providers of services under medicare and medicaid.

The House bill provides that the existing Federal-State programs of Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Aged, and Aid to the Disabled be repealed and a new, totally Federal program substituted, to be administered by the Social Security Administration. The eligibility requirements of the new combined adult aid program would be as follows: individuals or couples would be eligible when their monthly income was less than the full monthly payment. The benefit for a single person would be \$130 a month for the first year, then \$140 for the next year, and \$150 for the third year and thereafter. Full monthly benefits for an individual with an eligible spouse would be \$195 for the first year and \$200 a month for the second year and thereafter. The first \$85 a month of earnings and one half above that would be exempt for the blind and disabled plus work expenses for the blind; and the first \$60 per month of earnings and one third over that for the aged. Individuals would not be eligible for payments if they had cash resources in excess of \$1,500. Blind and disabled recipients would be referred to State agencies for vocational rehabilitation and, if they refused any services without good cause, aid would be discontinued. The present program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children would be repealed and two new and totally Federal programs would take its place. Families in which at

least one person is employable would be enrolled in the Opportunities for Families Program, administered by the Department of Labor, while families with no employable persons would be enrolled in the Family Assistance Plan administered by HEW.

The Senate bill, on the other hand, provides for the continuation of State administration of the programs for the blind, aged, and disabled, but with the same minimum grant of \$130 a month for an individual and \$195 for a couple. In addition it would provide that the first \$50 a month of social security or other income would not cause any reduction in these minimum assistance payments. Those States paying higher grants could continue to do so. In addition, an added exemption of \$50 a month of earned income plus one half of any earnings above that amount would be permitted for the blind, aged, and disabled. Thus, as far as recipients of Aid to the Blind are concerned, there would be an exemption of \$135 a month of earned income, plus one-half of all over that. The bill prohibits the imposition of liens against the property of blind individuals as a condition of eligibility for aid. However, there would be no Federal uniform eligibility rules as in the House bill. The determination would be left to the States on such matters as assets, resources, relatives' responsibility and other eligibility factors. A conference committee will have to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of H. R. 1.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT AMENDMENTS

House and Senate hearings were held

this year on vocational rehabilitation amending bills.

The National Federation of the Blind appeared before the House Select Sub-Committee on Education and argued for acceptance of two Federation-supported bills, which had been developed by representatives of all of the "of and for" organizations in the blind field, including the National Federation of the Blind

H. R. 9847, introduced in the House by Congressman John Brademas, had as its purpose the refocusing of vocational rehabilitation agency programming and vocational rehabilitation agency efforts toward meeting the needs of severely disabled people.

H. R. 7949, introduced in the House by Congressman Carl Perkins, authorized the provision of rehabilitation services to older blind persons.

Although the members of the Select Sub-Committee on Education and the Committee on Education and Labor recognized the merits of these measures, they failed to effectively incorporate them in H. R. 8395, the Committee and House-approved vocational rehabilitation amending bill.

So, when the Senate Sub-Committee on the Handicapped, which had been made a permanent part of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee earlier in this Congress, conducted vocational rehabilitation hearings, the NFB representative and representatives of other blind and severe disability organizations offered amendments to H. R. 8395--amendments, that in fact,

were provisions of our two House-supported bills.

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDING STAND ACT AMENDMENTS

Shortly after the 92nd Congress convened in 1971, Senator Jennings Randolph introduced S. 2506, a bill to amend the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act to provide: for the exclusive assignment of vending machine income to blind vending stand operators, to allow foods and beverages to be prepared on the vending stand location, to authorize state licensing agencies to determine which articles are to be sold in a vending stand, to remove the one-year residence requirement, to provide that in newly constructed or leased or rented federal agency buildings there be included suitable sites for the establishment of vending stands, to provide for a three-man body to handle fair hearings of disputes between vending stand operators and state licensing agencies, to provide for an arbitration mechanism for resolving disputes over the Randolph-Sheppard Program which arise between Federal departments and agencies and State vending stand licensing agencies, and to permit judicial review of fair hearing decisions.

This bill passed the Senate in 1970 without a dissenting vote but was killed in the House when Postal Service employee unions avalanched Congress with opposition letters and telegrams--the retention of vending machine income was far more important to them than increasing employment opportunities for blind persons wanting to work and qualified and trained to work!

Representatives of organizations of

and for the blind (including John Taylor and me for the National Federation of the Blind) met with post office union officials several times to "negotiate" our differences. The post office people, however, were inflexible, refusing to yield one dime from vending machines in Postal Service "swing" rooms and locker rooms.

Finally, the Senate Sub-Committee on the Handicapped held hearings on S. 2506, and "marked up" this measure minus the "exclusive assignment of vending machine income" provision, calling, instead, upon the General Accounting Office to investigate the entire question of vending machine income from machines located on Federal property with a report to be made to Congress on this matter next year.

MODEL WHITE CANE LAW

Just as many State affiliates of the Federation have gone to their legislatures to seek passage of the Model White Cane Law, so did the D. C. affiliate, but since the legislative body governing the national capital is Congress, it was necessary for D. C. Federationists to get this measure through Congress.

Tom Bickford, legislative chairman of the National Federation of the Blind of the District of Columbia, arranged for Congressman Joel T. Broyhill of northern Virginia to introduce the Model White Cane Law in the House of Representatives and it was designated H. R. 11032.

Chairman Tom assigned sections of the Model White Cane Law to D. C. Federation members, and each prepared testimony on his section for presentation in House hearings.

Hearings were held by a Sub-Committee of the D. C. Committee, and after only three Federation witnesses had read their statements, the Sub-Committee Chairman declared no further testimony was necessary. The Sub-Committee met in Executive Session immediately following the public hearings and approved the bill, making two strengthening changes in it: one which extended the employment section to cover private employment as well as public employment, and the other which put "teeth" into the bill-making violations of the provisions of the Model White Cane Law in the District of Columbia punishable by a \$300 fine or 90 day jail sentence or both.

H. R. 11032 as amended passed the House of Representatives without one vote in opposition and hearings are expected in the Senate in September.

REDUCED PLANE FARES FOR THE HANDICAPPED

On June 15, the Aviation Sub-Committee of the Senate Committee on Commerce held public hearings on a flock of bills with varied proposals to provide reduced plane fares for the elderly and for the handicapped.

The NFB appeared in these hearings in opposition to the measures in conformity with a Federation resolution adopted at our national Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1964.

Following the hearings, I was told that the position of the Federation--of rejecting reduced plane fares legislation on the ground that it was not justified--was most commendable and most likely served

to kill these bills in the present Congress.

FEDERAL JURORS

When Sub-Committee Five of the House Judiciary Committee conducted public hearings on several bills to make changes in Federal jury selection laws, the NFB submitted testimony in the hearings in support of an amendment that would change existing laws from a rather clear presumption that a blind person is unqualified to serve as a juror in Federal courts to a very clear and emphatic presumption of capability and qualification.

I was informed that our testimony was considered carefully by the members of the Sub-Committee, but the offered amendment was not adopted nor were many other proposed changes, since it soon developed that the Sub-Committee only intended to act to allow 18 year olds to serve on Federal juries.

BRAILLE SYMBOLS ON CURRENCY

At the Houston NFB Convention last year, a resolution was adopted condemning a Congressional bill which would require that raised symbols be placed on United States currency for the benefit of the blind. This resolution stressed that other and far more major problems of the blind needed Congressional solution, and that enactment of the bill would only serve to perpetuate the public misconception of the blind as innately helpless and dependent.

Following the Houston Convention and upon my return to Washington, I took this resolution to Mr. James Conlon,

director of the Federal Bureau of Printing and Engraving which manufactures American money. We discussed the resolution and I was shown Dutch and American bills with Braille symbols said to be on them--but I could detect nothing.

Later, I learned our resolution was being circulated in Congress--and this probably has doomed a truckload of benevolently intended identical bills which would require the Braille of American currency.

MANPOWER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENTS

When House hearings were held during this year to extend and expand the scope of the Manpower Training and Development Act, administered by the Department of Labor, the NFB joined with others in the blind field to draft amendments to the Act which would prohibit exclusion of blind persons from participation in programs operating under the Act, and to create in the Act a section providing for the establishment of training programs specifically for blind workers.

The amendments were not adopted.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT AMENDMENTS

When House and Senate hearings were conducted to extend and improve the Older Americans Act, the NFB joined with others in the blind field to develop amendments with reference to the unmet needs of elderly blind and otherwise disabled people.

These amendments provided that the Secretary of HEW be authorized to make grants to or contract with public or other

non-profit agencies for homemaker services, shopping services, special transportation and escort services, reader service, letter writing service, and other personal services designed to aid and assist elderly handicapped persons in the management of their homes and of their lives.

NEW POLICIES AND TRENDS IN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYMENT FOR THE BLIND

by
Edward F. Rose

[Editor's Note: Mr. Rose is the Director of Public Policy Employment Programs, Manpower Resources Division, Bureau of Recruiting and Examining, U. S. Civil Service Commission. The following address was made at the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Chicago, Illinois, July 2-7, 1972.]

It is a distinct pleasure to address your conference again. I often tell your Executive Secretary that I know you will eventually tire of hearing the story of employment of the blind in the Federal Service as told by one, Ed Rose. But, I truly hope that the story changes enough to keep you from finding it a bore.

Changes have occurred since we last met and, I believe, some are very exciting. The one that I am most excited about is a change in our procedures which permits State Vocational counselors and Veterans Administration counselors to make selective placements of the severely handicapped based on their certification that the person can do the job. What this means is that it is not necessary for a

severely handicapped person to take an examination to qualify for a position. But, it does require that he have a rehabilitation counselor who can develop a job within an agency by selling that agency on the fact that despite the handicap of his client—he has the qualifications to do the job.

Some people become concerned with this procedure because they would like to compete with all others for employment. To this I say, "great," for we still will modify any test we give to accommodate any handicap. However, I honestly feel that the only way we will ever break the stereotype concept of what different groups of handicapped people can and cannot do is to develop some experimental situations, if you will. By this, I mean we are going to have to sell employers on giving, especially the blind, opportunities for employment in jobs which traditionally have not been open to them.

This will require a counselor to identify the skills and potential of his client, get out from behind his desk, and get into organizations where these talents can be used. He will have to convince the employer that his client can do the job. I encourage especially the young people here, who are on the threshold of their careers, to consider breaking the barrier of "different" occupations by availing themselves of the new Federal appointing procedure.

For the record, we now have over 1,650 severely handicapped persons serving under this special appointing authority. Over 25% of them are legally blind or totally blind. The largest user of the authority is the Internal Revenue Service in their programs for taxpayer

representative. The Social Security Administration is beginning to catch fire with a similar effort.

Now that the U. S. Postal Service has been established as an independent agency, they are no longer providing information about Federal employment. Therefore, we have devised an information system using the telephone. We call the system "WATS" (Wide Area Telephone System). WATS is a nation-wide telecommunication system which permits our Federal Job Information Centers to offer toll-free long distance telephone information service to the public through a given area. For example, a person in northern Michigan can dial the WATS number in the Detroit Federal Job Information Center and talk directly to the Center's information specialist.

WATS numbers are distinguished from other long distance numbers by special area code--all WATS numbers use the "800" area code. When an "800" number is dialed, the caller calls toll-free--a pay phone even returns his dime. However, as in the case of other long distance calls, the operator may ask for the caller's number. The telephone company does this merely to make sure that a charge is not made to the caller.

This service is now offered in 47 States. WATS is not available at this time in Hawaii, California, and Rhode Island. Alternative methods for providing toll-free telephone service in these areas are now under consideration.

I want to make it clear that this service is only available within a given State *not* between States. However, in addition to obtaining information about

Federal jobs within the given area, you also can receive nation-wide job information. Other services offered by this system are answers to questions on:

- Job requirements and qualifications.

- Application and examination procedures.

- Hiring programs for special groups, such as Vietnam era veterans and the physically handicapped.

- Special employment counseling and guidance services.

The information specialist can also mail to the caller current materials, such as:

- Job announcements

- Application forms

- Pamphlets describing special employment and other civil service programs.

To compensate for the loss of the Postal Service's testing assistance and to supplement the effectiveness of our 65 area offices located in major Federal employment centers, the Commission plans to establish Federal Job Information and Testing Centers. These centers will provide local testing and Federal job information services in major metropolitan areas. Twenty-four Federal Job Information Testing Centers are currently being established. Our continuing aim is to provide the public with as much information as possible.

I would like to point out that each of

our area offices has a person who serves as the Selective Placement Specialist for that area. Handicapped people can avail themselves of the assistance of these specialists to contact the Coordinator for Selective Placement in each Federal agency for possible placement assistance. Our coordinator system is improving as the persons who serve in this role become more involved in placement efforts. I am hopeful that we can greatly strengthen the system by urging agencies to allot more time for coordinators to devote to the program. As I have mentioned in my previous presentations this is a permissive program on the part of agencies and is only as effective as the person occupying the position. I know of a number of coordinators who are doing tremendous jobs, but they need to be encouraged to do better. I would like to see your Federation consider setting up an award or awards to give recognition to persons who do a good job of placing or employing the blind.

Just yesterday, I challenged the National Association of Blind Secretaries and Transcribers to develop a pamphlet to be titled, "So You Are Going to Supervise the Blind." They accepted the challenge and I hope you will consider the awards challenge. A little recognition from an organization such as yours would stimulate interest and greater effort on the part of the managers and employers.

As a side light, I am now serving as President of Job Placement Division of the National Rehabilitation Association and hope that in that capacity we can stimulate additional interest in placement techniques across the country. I hope that we can develop a placement network of work placement advisory committees that

ultimately can offer assistance in placement even to those from outside of their jurisdictions.

What I'm saying is that I would like to see handicapped persons have opportunities to be mobile--not to be dropped into any one job or area because of their disabilities. I know that your President's State agency has such a committee now and I hope he and his staff will join JPD in its effort to spread the concept across the country.

But back to the Federal picture. A couple of years ago I went off-the-record and suggested that the Federation bring its influence to bear on the need to fund readers for the blind for a longer period than is now possible. What I really suggest is that if a young professional needs a reader from the time of his entry into a job until he reaches the journeyman's level then, where clerical help can be provided for that purpose, that it be made possible.

Let me be as candid as you have known me to be before. In the Federal Government we are talking about two things--money and employment slots. The employment slots are not the real problem, but the money is (especially now!). Contrary to popular belief, Federal managers are concerned about the cost of the Government, especially where the cost of manpower is concerned. A Federal manager cannot be expected to essentially hire two people where one should be able to do the job. He would rather not be confronted with such possibilities. This is what we are expecting him to do if he has to pay for the reader of a young budding employee.

I would suggest that legislation could

provide for funds for this purpose. I agree with John Nagle--this is *not* a simple thing to accomplish, since it would require interagency cooperation. It would seem feasible to have such a program administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration from their central office. We aren't talking about a large number at this time and it would not involve too much red tape.

Israel has long since decided that if a person has a brain that they want to tap, then they must provide him "eyes," if you will. The new devices discussed early this afternoon are approaching this need, but they have not solved all of the problems involved. I suggest that until they do, we consider the further development of the provisions of Public Law 87-614 to meet the immediate needs for readers for our young professionals.

NFB TEACHERS DIVISION MEETS

Fresh from sponsoring an outstanding teachers conference in New York, the Teachers Division of the National Federation of the Blind held its second annual meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois, on the afternoon of July 3, 1972, as part of the activities of the annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind.

The meeting began with a presidential report by Robert Acosta. He opened his remarks with the announcement of the successful passage through the Congress of the NFB sponsored amendment to the Primary and Secondary Education Act. It is embodied in the Education Act Amendments of

1972 and adds Section 904 to the Act. This section specifically prohibits those colleges and universities which receive Federal funds from refusing to admit or educate a student because of his blindness. Activities during the past year were centered around organizing or enlarging organizations in New York and California but that organizational work will continue nationwide. All blind teachers will be apprised of the activities of the NFB Teachers Division in various ways, but principally through wider distribution of the Division's *Newsletter*. Mr. Acosta reported the opposition of the Department of Rehabilitation in Illinois. In spite of their outright hostility and the fact that the Department has chosen to assist the American Council's teacher organization, the NFB is unstoppable and the president said "We will organize the blind teachers of Illinois regardless of agency opposition."

Current and future activities include: a handbook answering those questions frequently asked by school administrators, now in preparation; a more complex booklet of articles written by blind teachers on how they function successfully in the classroom, on which work has already begun; and a half-hour film on video tape which will show the blind teacher in action, which is now in the planning stage. President Acosta concluded his report with the comment that "The time has come for blind teachers to begin to sell themselves through a dynamic public relations program. We shall accomplish just that in the upcoming year."

The keynote speaker for this year's meeting was Dr. Jacob Freid, the Director of the Jewish Braille Institute of America,

located in New York City. Dr. Freid is a member of the NFB Board of Directors. In his speech, entitled "The Blind Teacher and the Triple Revolution," Dr. Freid asserted that in spite of the successful record of the blind teacher in the classroom, teachers must still deal with the gut issue of discrimination practiced against them because they are blind.

Mr. Carl Schier, attorney at law from Detroit, Michigan, who has worked with the NFB on behalf of blind teachers for many years, addressed the group on the subject of "The Blind Teacher and Classroom Liability." He pointed out that no teacher, sighted or blind, can be expected to do what is beyond his physical capacity. The definition of liability as it relates to teachers in most states was outlined. School districts in many states, as units of state governments, are not subjects of liability suits under the doctrine of governmental immunity. He urged each person to ascertain if such a law exists in his respective State. The text of Mr. Schier's speech will be made available to members of the Teachers Division.

A distinguished panel discussing the education of blind children in Illinois followed:

Representing the Chicago City Schools were Dr. Elberta Pruitt, Director of Special Education, and Miss Rosemary Welsh, a consultant for the district. They reviewed the programs for the education of blind youngsters in Chicago. The representatives of the Teachers Division voiced concern that the "normal" blind student not be forgotten in the district's efforts to educate the multi-handicapped child. Much apprehension was indicated

because only a token number of blind children was being included in the itinerant programs of the district.

Thomas Svob, Assistant Superintendent of the Illinois Braille and Sight Saving School, discussed the operations of the residential school in Jacksonville. He was especially optimistic about the new work-study program. Members of the audience pointed out to him that more students should be doing work off campus and he was in full agreement.

Mrs. Doris Willoughby, resource teacher, then discussed her particular situation in the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) School System. She believes in keeping the child in a regular classroom situation as much as possible. It is her job to lend support to the blind child by providing him with the necessary materials and skills which best allow him to pursue his studies.

The panel was chaired by James Gashel, instructor at the Iowa Commission for the Blind who was instrumental in conducting a survey of the education of blind children in the residential school and in the resource programs of Iowa. This panel concluded on a very positive note with each of the panelists pledging to open channels of communication with the representatives of the National Federation of the Blind in order to improve the education of blind children.

Another panel concerned itself with the subject "Teacher Placement in Illinois as a Reflection of Our National Employment Crisis." Moderated by Kenneth Hopkins, Director, Idaho Commission for the Blind, the panel included: Mrs. Rochelle Hart, an officer of

the Chicago Teachers Union; Thomas McGreal, Director of the Educational Office, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana; Mrs. Gail Lieberman, representing the Illinois State Department of Education; Mrs. Veronica Cummings, representing the Chicago City School System; and Donald Mailloux, representing the National Education Association.

Mrs. Hart asserted that the union would assist in any way if discrimination were practiced against a teacher because of his blindness. She also commented on the passage of House Bill 4168 in Illinois, which prevents school districts from practicing discrimination because of a physical handicap. This is indeed a victory for the National Federation of the Blind.

Mr. Donald Mailloux cited incidents where the NEA has assisted blind teachers who had been victims of discrimination. He also discussed the DuShane Fund which is for the use of those teachers who must fight lengthy and expensive court cases.

A most thoughtful discussion on the placement of teachers was presented by Mr. McGreal. He stressed the fact that the blind teacher must get to the interviews. A placement office, he commented, should do everything in its power to place all of its qualified teachers. Districts often owe placement officials favors and hiring a blind teacher would not prove to be an inconvenience for the district in question. The National Association of Placement Offices could be of great assistance in breaking down the barriers of discrimination for handicapped teachers. He encouraged the Teachers Division to make a presentation before this

organization.

Mrs. Lieberman stated that the Superintendent of Public Instruction was solidly behind the employment of handicapped teachers. She was willing to investigate the possibility of taking a survey in order to find out where the blind teachers of Illinois were teaching and what they were teaching. There was much distress expressed over the fact that the Department of Rehabilitation in Illinois would not release such a list to the NFB Teachers Division, although they chose to give the American Council all the help it desired, including use of the Department's stationery.

Mrs. Cummings announced that the District would be most happy to hire well-qualified blind teachers. By the close of her presentation, members of the NFB secured a promise from her to work with them in the establishment of a suitable policy which would lead to the hiring of many qualified teachers without any mention of blindness.

This year's meeting was concluded with a rap session between a select panel of three master teachers and those teachers in the audience who had any questions regarding classroom procedure. Discipline seemed to be the most common problem. It was soon apparent that the blind teachers present were able to provide many suggestions and solutions on handling disciplinary problems. Such a discussion made it clear that a handbook on teaching techniques would not only be helpful to school administrators, but to blind teachers as well.

Upon the adjournment of the second annual meeting of the NFB Teachers

Division, one was left with a great feeling of optimism. Because of the opposition of the state agency for the blind in Illinois, the Division was unable to officially form a state teachers organization. However, the members came away with the full realization that the Teachers Division, working through the Illinois Congress of the Blind, would definitely be heard speaking for blind teachers in Illinois. With each passing day, more and more blind teachers are realizing that it is the Teachers Division of the NFB which is really doing things on their behalf. It is able to act for blind teachers because it is a part of the largest and most powerful organization of the blind in this nation.

The next meeting of the Teachers Division will be held in July of 1973 in New York City as part of the annual meeting of the National Federation of the Blind.

CORRESPONDENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

by

Rosamond M. Critchley

The Correspondence Committee of the National Federation of the Blind held its annual meeting at the Palmer House, Chicago, Tuesday, July 4th, starting at 8 p.m. It was chaired by Perry Sundquist, editor of *The Braille Monitor* and Hazel tenBroek, associate editor. States represented included Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina,

Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. There was also a guest from Ethiopia.

As always, the purpose of the meeting was twofold: Discussion of how *The Monitor* might be improved, and of matters pertaining to State newsletters.

Six editors of newsletters were present, and ten of the affiliates represented do not publish anything on a regular basis. Questions were brought up concerning how often a newsletter should be published, what sort of news it should contain and how best to gather such news, how the publication can be financed, how a mailing list can be gathered and kept up to date, methods of distribution, and the problem of meeting deadlines. Those who are not now sending copies of their newsletters to *The Monitor* editors were emphatically urged to do so.

Presidential releases came in for their usual share of attention, and the importance of having them read at local meetings was reemphasized. To the suggestion that they be issued on tape, the answer was that this would involve too much delay in getting the information out and would be very expensive.

The major part of the meeting was devoted to questions concerning *The Monitor*. The report of a State convention should be sent in as soon as possible, so the news will not be stale when published. It was suggested that these reports contain more detail of the significant issues discussed, as it is good to know that other affiliates have problems similar to one's own. The lighter side, too, can be of interest. *The Monitor* will be glad to

publish notices of State conventions in advance if the information is received in time.

It was pointed out that there is plenty of interesting news in States which do not publish a newsletter, and *The Monitor* is eager to receive it. One person should, of course, be charged with the responsibility of writing the State convention report, as duplication on that subject can create confusion. As to other items, two or more reports of the same story are better than none. However, if someone can be chosen to be the State's official correspondent, the news can be better coordinated. Even when an item is not actually published in *The Monitor*, it may still be used as a source of information. For instance, the editor would appreciate receiving copies of the minutes of State board meetings. Any format is acceptable for sending material, provided it is legible, but double spacing is preferred.

It was asked whether information on job openings can be published. The answer was "no," as this constitutes a form of advertising, but it would be possible for such information to be circulated in a Presidential Release.

It would help, when sending a newspaper clipping, if the sender could also see about the permission to reprint it. Also, when sending an article concerning a blind person, it would be most helpful to let the editor know whether this person is a member of the NFB.

Some questioned the significance of the "Recipe of the Month," but we were told that this is popular with many readers. The occasional publication of a

too sentimental or sensational article about some blind person was also questioned. On this point, it was argued that it is well to be informed on what journalists are actually producing, although it might be of advantage to have such articles prefaced with some editorial comment. Still another suggestion was that we have more articles concerning techniques and technology. The answer was that when such articles appear, inquiries start pouring in, and the staff simply does not have the time for necessary research as to whether the device or product is on the market, or in an experimental stage.

Reprints of *Monitor* articles in booklet form cannot be had, but photostatic copies of articles on a particular subject are available. Concerning the proposed issuance of a complete set of back numbers of *The Monitor* in bound volumes, it was suggested that copies of these volumes be bought by local chapters and presented to university libraries.

The recorded edition of *The Monitor* will continue at 16-2/3 RPM, as the quality on the 8-1/3 discs was not found to be satisfactory. The Braille edition is sent in stapled boxes because this seems to be the only way it can travel safely.

A suggestion was made that when a bill of interest to us is debated in Congress, *The Monitor* report on how the various Senators and Representatives vote on it. There was also a suggestion that the NFB Convention agenda be published in the June issue, but because the deadline for this number is April 20th, this is obviously impossible.

Finally, we were asked if we would

like to have an editors workshop at next year's meeting. In this connection, the thought was expressed that it might be appropriate to change the name of the Correspondence Committee to something like Committee on Public Relations.

The meeting adjourned at about 10 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ON THE ACB CONVENTION

by
Benedict Arnold

The following report is absolutely confidential and not for release to anybody at all. Many people thought my espionage activities ended with the American Revolution, but they were wrong. I have been quietly and secretly working through the years to improve the lot of one group or another. Thus, I recently staked out the ACB convention and herewith make a report concerning it for the files of the ACB officers since they may have dozed through parts of the proceedings. Under no circumstances should this report be allowed to fall into the hands of the hated National Federation of the Blind. If such a catastrophe should occur, the Federation (following its usual despicable practices) might expose us to the whole world by printing my statements in *The Monitor*. However, I am sure there is no danger of that. I have always been expert and skillful at espionage.

We must be careful not to let the Federation discover that our weighted voting system gives virtual control of the organization to five states—Florida,

Illinois, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

Now that I have established my connections, I will be reporting to you on future ACB activities I sit in the high councils of the ACB unsuspected by my fellow members. It was ever thus with Benedict Arnold Onward and upward for the good of the cause. Herewith the report.

The ACB convention took place Wednesday through Saturday, July 5-8, 1972, at the Portland Hilton Hotel, Portland, Oregon. This was preceded, on Monday and Tuesday, July 3-4, by meetings of "special interest groups" There were nine of these groups meeting: the ACB Service Net, the Coordinating Committee of Dog-Guide Users, the Coordinating Committee of Visually Impaired Social Workers, the National Association of Blind Teachers, the National Coordinating Committee of Blind Students, the American Blind Lawyers Association, the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America, the Visually Impaired Secretarial Transcribers Association, and the World Council of Blind Lions. Most of these groups are still in the process of organizing and had only a few members meeting to discuss plans for gaining ACB affiliation. The three coordinating committees (dog-guide users, social workers, blind students) are at this stage, with the dog-guide users the largest group and the students the smallest (six students met) and newest. The World Council of Blind Lions (from what I could gather, this is not an international group) is in the process of polling its members by mail on the question of ACB affiliation. Fred Lilley of Missouri is the force behind

this organization. He reported that of the several hundred ballots mailed out a week before the convention, about twenty-five had been returned and showed a strong vote in favor of affiliation.

The Coordinating Committee of Visually Impaired Social Workers reported at the convention that they had decided that their concerns were the same as those of blind persons in related social work fields. As a result, they had decided to form an umbrella affiliate of "Allied Social Professions."

The ACB Service Net, the National Association of Blind Teachers (NABT), the American Blind Lawyers Association (ABLA), the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America (RSVA), and the Visually Impaired Secretarial-Transcribers Association (VISTA) are all voting affiliates of the ACB, although the teachers group is still in formation (fewer than ten members met).

The ACB Service Net is an organization of blind ham radio operators, whose president is Travis Harris of Oklahoma, a man of enormous enthusiasm. There were thirty blind hams at the convention ("the largest gathering of blind hams in one place at one time," Mr. Harris told us several times). Their major activity is the Amateur Radio Eye Bank Net, which connects people needing eye transplants with available eyes. They work with the Lions Eye Bank Program. They set up a station on the 23rd floor of the Hilton and received and broadcast messages during the convention.

The vendors group (RSVA) was the largest of the special interest groups at the convention, with about sixty members.

Their president is Wally Menning of Oregon, a very active ACB member who is involved in legislation in Oregon and who was elected to the ACB board of directors at the convention.

There were about twenty lawyers at the ABLA meeting. This group is intimately involved with the ACB, containing in its membership Durward McDaniel, Reese Robrahn, Paul Kirton, and three others prominent at the ACB convention--John Vanlandingham of Arizona, Vernon Williams of South Dakota, and Norman Robinson of Illinois. But the meetings of the ABLA betrayed little association with the ACB or even with blindness. The sessions were devoted to talks by practicing blind lawyers concentrating on advice to the blind law student about making a living at law. There were no law students present that I could see, but the meetings were lively and there was much trading of tips and discussion of alternative techniques. They discussed the ways a blind lawyer could find himself legally in a false position as the result of his blindness (witnessing wills, for example) and the consensus was that a lawyer would be a fool to take any action which might focus attention on his blindness. As Arnold Sadler of Washington said, the question of blind attorneys has never arisen in his state and he wants to maintain that situation.

The Secretarial-Transcribers meeting was interesting mainly for the appearance of Robert Bray at the Workshop on the VISTA Newsletter. The VISTA group is small (there were about fifteen members at the meetings) and not very active. They spent some time discussing the difficulty in getting people to fill positions on the VISTA board of directors. The one person

there who was on the ball was Shirley Boaz, president of the Illinois VISTA group. She is a sharp woman and her remarks were filled with cracks against the NFB. [This was a combination I ran into throughout the convention: There is a core of people in the organization who are energetic and active and who are the leaders of the ACB movement. These people are generally the ones who are violently antipathetic to the NFB and its leaders. Their stance toward the NFB is strange--all references to it are euphemistic, as if the NFB were an off-color joke which everybody knows. The speech of these people was filled with references to the NFB and its president, but *never* direct references. We would hear about "the other group of the organized blind," or "a high figure in work for the blind," or simply "the enemy." Even during Durward McDaniel's explanation of the suit against the Iowa Commission there was no mention of names or organizations except when he read the complaint and had to say "National Federation of the Blind." There was a sensation in the audience at hearing the name said aloud.

Opposed to this group of leaders is the general membership of the ACB. I got the impression that to them the NFB is about as urgent a problem as the Kiwanis Club is to Rotarians. They would laugh at jokes made about the NFB but never asked about it at the sessions or talked about it among themselves. The contrast between a non-political and malleable membership and an energetic, highly political leadership was first made clear to me at the VISTA Newsletter Workshop at which Robert Bray spoke.]

The Newsletter workshop began with

a report by Natalie Black of Houston, retiring editor, who explained the difficulties of publishing the newsletter when little was contributed and when the publishing board didn't reply to her letters. The next speaker was Rita Drill of Philadelphia, the editor for next year. She said that she hoped to upgrade the newsletter by eliminating personal reports not of interest to secretaries generally, and by including reprinted articles from magazines for sighted secretaries. She also mentioned their hopes of publishing the newsletter in Braille (presently it is produced only in large type.) The impression I got was that the whole venture was on a very shaky basis, despite the high hopes of the new editor. I emphasize this in relation to the talk of the next speaker, Mr. Bray.

Bray began his talk with a joke [a marine sergeant in Vietnam told his soldiers that he had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that they would get to change their underwear. The bad news was that they would have to change with each other.] He then mentioned that his college training had been in zoology (an earlier speaker was a biologist), and he said that this training had proved useful in dealing with the "camouflage" and "parasitism" he encountered in working for the Library of Congress.

Bray addressed himself to the matter of producing the VISTA Newsletter in Braille. He said that some years ago Don Nold had come to him with a request that the LC produce a magazine for him called the "Talking Lion" (or some similar name). Bray told Nold that if he did that he would then be obligated to publish similar magazines for Rotary and Kiwanis.

But then he talked with Nold and discovered that Nold's plans were "much broader" than a house organ for the Lions. Bray suggested that if the name were changed the magazine could be published as an original periodical for the blind. *Dialogue* was the result. Sometime after that a Data Processors group [I assume he meant VIDPI—Visually-Impaired Data Processors, Inc. This group did not meet in Portland and had no delegates at the ACB convention] asked Bray to reproduce on talking book records a professional magazine for data processors. Later they became dissatisfied with the magazine they had chosen and wanted to produce a magazine with articles selected from all the publications for sighted data processors. Bray helped them to do this, and, he said, history was repeating itself. In listening to Rita Drill he had realized that her ideas went far beyond a mere newsletter. If they would consider changing the name of the publication [it was changed tentatively to "Office Worker Units"], he would undertake to get it produced by the Library of Congress. There was no question about their being able to do this, apparently. Bray told Rita Drill to let him know how many copies of the magazine they needed and he could include it "pretty exactly in [his] expense account." His listeners were delighted. Shirley Boaz said she could hug him, since she was eager to change the name of the group anyway. Another member asked if they could have a fancy cover like the ones recently produced by the LC for other periodicals. Bray said he could hug her for her words. Magazines are a special hobby of his and the new covers one of his fondest accomplishments. He said he had been criticized for it by "a high official in work for the blind."

The ACB convention itself began Wednesday afternoon, with Judge Reese Robrahn presiding. A year ago he had announced that before retiring as president he wanted 40 affiliates in the ACB. He was pleased to announce that they now had forty-two (including the special interest groups). However, at the roll call of the states later seventeen of these affiliates had no delegation present. There were about three hundred people at this opening session. The number dropped to about one hundred fifty the next day, which was the average attendance at the rest of the sessions.

The first speaker at the Wednesday session was Don O. Nold whose talk was "Dialogue with Progress." Judge Robrahn introduced Nold as having worked in "direct mail advertising" from 1938-1966. Nold began his talk by saying that *Dialogue* had got a lot of free publicity during the past year. He mentioned the *Monitor* and immediately said "I shouldn't say that name here." Then he said that he was pleased to be included in the same category as Bob Bray, and he called out, "We're in the same league, Bob."

Nold said that *Dialogue* would have a new sound soon (a new reader, I gathered). He told an anecdote in which someone coined the term "stubborn blind" to indicate blind persons who insist on using Braille when recordings are available. Nold then talked about the "positive" philosophy of *Dialogue*. He said that the blind are not alike in what they can do: that they have individual characteristics as do all people. But if these are negative, the public attributes them to blindness. He said he had been taken to task for his statement "If you want to be accepted in a predominantly

sighted world, you must look like, act like, and think like a sighted person as much as you can." There was applause as he said this.

Nold questioned whether workers in sheltered shops have the capacity to be successful in life "as we do." He then concluded with a few vague statements about the government's providing incentives for such people, but only if they are needed. I would say that Nold is a silly man with a great sense of self-importance, who will say anything that comes into his head. I had the occasion to eat breakfast one morning at the next table from Nold and a woman breakfasting with him. He was discussing his friendship with a multi-millionaire named W. Plymouth Stone. Stone apparently contributes much of the money for the budget of *Dialogue*. He provided matching funds in a recent fundraising drive in the amount of nearly \$100,000.

Nold's talk was followed by that of an eye surgeon who had operated in Asia and Africa. He described eye diseases around the world and his experiences in dealing with them. In response to a question about organizations of the blind outside of the United States, he replied that he knew of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and some church missionary projects, but that was all.

Next was Reese Robrahn's president's report. He stated that it was ACB policy to become involved with policy-making procedures of agencies rather than to criticize from the outside. He described his trip to Moscow to attend the Executive Committee meeting of the WCWB. He said that he also belonged to

the Service Advisory Committee of the American Foundation for the Blind. That committee has prepared a report, which is presently under consideration by the AFB, and which will, Robrahn thought, drastically change the "image" of the Foundation, particularly in the area of consumer participation. He concluded by saying that he was on the National Advisory Committee to the Department of HEW. The president's report was brief and gave little more information about any of these topics than I have included. There was a good deal more about the trip to Moscow and a later trip to Armenia.

The last item on the agenda for the Wednesday session was Robert Bray's "Report of Activities." Bray began with another joke [about the man who fell into a beer vat and came up three times, before he drowned, to go to the bathroom]. He introduced three of his staff members who were attending the convention in their official capacities, as Bray carefully pointed out. They were Donna Pastore (president of NABT), Liz Strauss, and Maxine Dorf. Maxine Dorf's husband Gene is president of the new District of Columbia ACB affiliate, the District of Columbia Association of Workers for the Blind, and the Dorfs were the two official delegates of the DCAWB at the convention.

Bray's report was, in large part, a defense. [The speeches of both Nold and Bray presupposed a fairly thorough knowledge of the NFB's magazine *The Monitor*, on the part of the audience. It struck me that most of Bray's hearers must have wondered what he was talking about.] He began with a general statement that he was doing the very best he could to provide goods and services to the blind

"within the existing limitations." One of these limitations is the difficulty of obtaining funds for services to such a small minority. Particularly is this true when the legislature sees that there are "personality problems" involved in programs for the blind. This is a problem too in finding more people to work as transcribers. Apparently potential transcribers are discouraged because they don't know "who to believe." Further, the public and the legislatures want to know why, if blindness is only an inconvenience, the blind are so demanding. Do the blind hope to change public attitudes by asking for so much? "Accusations" and "exaggerated claims" destroy enthusiasm and result in a loss of understanding and sympathy by the public. He went on to say that this was destructive criticism of the "cheapest variety" and that the ACB must work to counteract the effect of those who "place egotism above service." He concluded this portion of his talk with a rambling statement, the effect of which was that constructive criticism is the basis of democracy.

Bray discussed his willingness to cooperate on ideas to improve services. He cited the creation of a professional journal for a group of blind data processors. He said that some students had come to him with a handbook which he had published for them. But they never came back and he concluded that the "willingness to cooperate" to provide services existed only "on a partisan basis." Bray talked about the difficulty of enrolling more people in the various LC programs. One difficulty was that blind people are reluctant to participate in view of the controversy and criticism involving the Library of Congress. [Apparently the differences between Bray and the NFB are

more widely known than the programs of the LC.]

At a later point, Bray said that organizations of the blind must realize that all of their members are not college graduates. He is hoping for a dialogue with these organizations that is "civilized and intelligent," but what dialogue there is exists "on a partisan basis." Critics must realize that they present "a single viewpoint" and consider the alternatives and the consequences of their criticism.

In answer to a question about the most effective way to locate a book, Bray said that after using the usual means (Regional Library, etc.), the simplest way was to arrange to have the book transcribed. He said one could look all over, finally locate the book and then find that they "won't lend it out of the state." There was laughter from the audience. Bray quipped, "You're laughing; I'm not."

In answer to a question about Earl Scharry's health, Bray said that the prognosis was not good.

The Melodonic Chorus concert was Wednesday evening. Aside from the printed announcement in the program, there were two mentions of this concert made at the convention. Judge Robrahn announced that the nominating committee was to begin at seven p.m. that evening, but would adjourn to allow people to attend the concert. Then at the Roll Call of the States, Ken Wimmer, president of the Utah ACB affiliate, reminded people that the Melodronics, a group associated with "our loyal opposition" in Utah, were performing that night.

The second session of the convention

on Thursday morning had, as its major event, the ACB Legislative Report by Bradley Burson, chairman of the Legislative Committee. Burson concentrated on what he called ACB legislation; that is, legislation sponsored by no other organization of the blind but ACB. There were two such pieces of legislation: the first was the effort to eliminate relatives' responsibility for blind persons over 21 years of age. The other was the attempt to raise exempt earned income under title X of the Social Security Act from \$85 to \$125. Most of the rest of the report concerned efforts to pass 2 for 1 airfare legislation. There were a number of questions from the floor about the progress of this and Burson said that it was being delayed because of the action of "adverse groups." He noted that they had in their files a resolution passed by the NFB supporting such legislation. Finally he added, in response to a direct question, that since the NFB was against 2 for 1 airfare and since legislators don't like to act if there is opposition, the measure probably would not be passed.

Burson was followed by the past president of the American Optometric Association, Richard Hopping, who talked at length about the "crucial decade of change in optometrics." He discussed the importance of low-vision clinics and optical aids. He belittled a statement made by an official that not much pleasure could be gained from reading when only two or three letters at a time could be seen. Hopping paused and said, "I imagine many of you here would be glad to see two or three letters at a time." This was greeted with loud applause.

Thursday afternoon was devoted to a field trip to the Oral Hull Park for the

Blind and Enchanted Garden Tour.

Friday morning was devoted to outside speakers. Adeline Becht, a deaf-blind woman, spoke about rehabilitation for the deaf-blind. There was a speaker on Oregon's Grant-in-Aid program and a speaker from the Cinderella Modelling School who gave a talk entitled "A Lion by Its Tail!?"

Friday afternoon was devoted to internal business—in this case reports of the special interest groups (I included this information in the discussion of the special interest groups) and the first resolutions. Also on Friday afternoon was the ACB Washington Report by Durward McDaniel.

McDaniel began by explaining that his activities took him all over the country and that he wouldn't confine himself to reporting his Washington activities. He expressed his delight at the formation of the special interest groups and predicted that many more would be formed. He added his belief that the ACB would become "the most important organization in the United States with the word blind in the title." He discussed the success of a leadership conference held for three states, Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas, and directed by Floyd Qualls and himself.

McDaniel lauded the formation of a credit union in Arizona (this was the effort of John Vanlandingham). He then discussed briefly two of the pieces of ACB legislation mentioned earlier. He said the ACB was the only organization to support the increased earned income exemption. Concerning the 2 for 1 airfare, he reiterated that the NFB had passed a resolution supporting this in 1949, that

the ACB first supported it in 1963 and the NFB first condemned it in 1964. There was much amusement at this.

McDaniel asked for help of the membership in seeing his prediction for the next year fulfilled. It was that the ACB would gain twelve new affiliates and increase its membership by twenty percent.

Then, as a closing to his report, McDaniel discussed the suit against the Iowa Commission. He said that he had been asked for help and advice by a group of blind Iowans who wanted relief from the "wrongs" and "misdeeds" being done them. He read the official complaint and praised the courage of Lyle Williams, president of the Iowa Council of the Blind and a plaintiff in the suit. Mr. Williams was courageous for opposing the director of the Iowa Commission while still depending on the Commission for funds to continue his graduate studies. Some earlier action against the Commission was referred to and McDaniel recounted his asking Williams whether he wanted to jeopardize himself further by being a plaintiff in the suit. Williams replied that he was too far in to quit now. McDaniel said that legal discretion prevented him from giving any details about the case, and none at all was given beyond the statement of the complaint and the vague references to "wrongs and misdeeds."

Lyle Williams was then introduced and came to the speaker's platform. He said that he wanted to assure the audience that the plaintiffs in the suit were "clearthinking, forthright, honest, and oh yes, patriotic." There was a good deal of laughter and the clear implication was that the plaintiffs' patriotism etc. had been

called into question. He went on to say that the problem with the Commission in Iowa had grown to become a "national problem" and this brought him to the matter of litigation expenses. There were two interruptions from the floor: one was a motion to give moral support to the plaintiffs, the other was a motion to help in some more tangible way. Neither motion was acted on and Williams asked that people who wished to contribute send donations to the litigation fund, Box 680, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The resolutions were voted on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. The elections on Saturday morning took up so much more time than was scheduled that several resolutions had not yet been presented when I left. The resolutions were presented by the chairman of the Resolutions Committee, Paul Kirton.

The first resolution (my notes don't include this resolution and my memory of it is not clear) concerned the Amateur Radio Eye Bank, giving it support in some way, and was passed without opposition or discussion. The second resolution opposed the imposition of a fee for directory assistance as proposed by A T & T. There was heated discussion of whether the resolution should be amended to include the physically handicapped and elderly in this proposed exemption from the fees. The amended resolution was finally passed.

The third resolution proposed that the Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation be allowed to use the name of ACB in its fundraising pitches and this passed. The fourth resolution, which passed, expressed thanks to those responsible for convention arrangements. This was amended to

include the personnel of the Portland Hilton.

The fifth resolution would have set up a committee to test and promote the Optacon. This wisdom of supporting a single visual aid when so many are being developed was questioned, also the broad scope and expense of the proposed project. The motion was tabled.

The sixth resolution proposed that "experienced" organizers be hired to train volunteers in the techniques of organizing. There was a question raised as to whether "experienced" organizers meant sighted professionals, and this point was not settled definitely. The resolution was amended to include a proviso that the committee to be appointed to carry out the project consult with the already existing membership committee. I think this resolution passed, but it may have been tabled.

The seventh resolution proposed that the U. S. Civil Rights Acts be amended to include the blind. The amendments mentioned are what is contained in the NFB's model white cane law (which was not mentioned).

The eighth resolution directed that Congress be asked to consider changing the currency to reflect different denominations with different sizes. There was a lot of controversy about this resolution between the vending stand operators who supported it and those who wished to table it so the meeting could adjourn. After a roll call vote on whether to table the resolution or not, the resolution itself passed unanimously.

The election of officers took place

Saturday. Floyd Qualls, director of the Oklahoma League for the Blind, was nominated and unanimously elected president. Bradley Burson was nominated for re-election to the first vice-presidency and won a closely contested battle (Fred Lilley and John Vanlandingham were nominated from the floor). Billie Elder of Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind was nominated and elected second vice-president. Eunice Fiorito of New York was nominated secretary but was defeated by Cathy Skivers of California. Ed Miller was nominated and elected treasurer.

There were four four-year terms on the board of directors to be filled, and two two-year positions vacated by Qualls and Skivers. Wally Menning of Oregon, Lester McLong (?), John Vanlandingham, and Norman Robinson of Illinois were elected to the four-year board terms. Norman Robinson is a black attorney/politician from Chicago, who was nominated from the floor. His supporters urged that the ACB be the first organization of the blind to include a black man on their directing board.

Paul Kirton was elected to fill out Floyd Qualls's term, and, as I left the contest between Vernon Williams and Eunice Fiorito for Skivers's vacated seat was still in progress. Vernon Williams had been nominated from the floor for first vice-president, but lost to Burson. He was nominated for two other earlier board seats and was again defeated.

There were thirty-three delegations voting in the elections. Listed below are the number of votes assigned to each delegation. I don't know the ratio of affiliated members to delegate votes, but

the relative strengths of the affiliates can be deduced.

Alabama-14
 Arizona-9
 Arkansas-6
 California-11
 Colorado-4
 District of Columbia-2
 Florida-24
 Georgia-5
 Idaho-2
 Iowa-4
 Illinois-25
 Kansas-22
 Louisiana (two affiliates)
 Capital City Council-2
 Louisiana Council-1
 Maryland-2
 Michigan-11
 Nevada-3
 New York-6
 North Carolina-13
 North Dakota-4
 Oklahoma-25
 South Dakota-4
 Tennessee-8
 Utah-3
 Vermont-1
 Washington-3
 Wisconsin-25
 ABLA-2
 RSV-16
 NABT-2
 VISTA-3
 ACB Service Net-1

Throughout the convention I tried to get an idea of the general policies and goals of the ACB. These were not articulated except for statements like Judge Robrahn's that the ACB believes in working within agencies to effect changes in them. There was a great deal of emphasis on the desirability of united

action by the "organizations and agencies with the word blind in their titles" but there was no discussion of why this was not happening nor real hope that it would (Durward McDaniel did mention favorably the instances of united legislative action during the last year). As with Lyle Williams's claim to patriotism, the call for united action was used to imply that the NFB was working for disunity. I was intrigued by the question of ACB objectives because I wondered what ACB members not committed to harassment of the NFB see as the purpose of their organization. I concluded (as I discussed earlier) that to the majority of members, the ACB has the position of Rotary Club or similar groups that are vaguely philanthropic but mainly social in

purpose. In this case, the constant proclamation of high purpose by the officers has obscured the lack of any effective action by the officers and paid staff of the Council.

There was no treasurer's report or discussion of finances at any of the sessions, except a warning during the discussion of the Optacon resolution that the treasury could not support an expensive project of that kind. George Card did not speak at any of the convention sessions, and was not present at the several at which his name was called for various reasons. He made an appearance at the banquet, introducing the new affiliates.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED 1972 CONVENTION
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

RESOLUTION 72-01

WHEREAS, efforts by the National Federation of the Blind and its affiliates have led to the substantial adoption of the Model White Cane Law in sixteen states, and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress is the legislative body which has the responsibility for making the laws regarding the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, the goals of the National Federation of the Blind, its affiliates and members at large, are vigorously made known to the public and to State and national legislators; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind of the District of Columbia, the chartered affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind in the District, worked with Congressman Joel T. Broyhill of Virginia to introduce into Congress HR 11032, a bill which would enact into law the Model White Cane Law in the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, members of the NFBDC presented supporting testimony before the appropriate House committee that subsequently led to the passage of HR 11032 by the House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, HR 11032 has been referred to the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization contact Senator Thomas Eagleton, Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, as well as all other members of the Committee in order to secure strong support and prompt action for HR 11032; and be it further resolved that the officers and members of the National Federation of the Blind take all steps necessary in order to obtain affirmative action by the entire Senate regarding this vital piece of legislation.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-02

WHEREAS, since 1967, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has been encouraging persons to make full use of personal telephone directories; and

WHEREAS, The American Telephone and Telegraph Company is presently considering various proposals for the reduction of expenditures for Directory Assistance, including the possibility of a twenty-five (25) cent charge for Directory Assistance or cancellation of Directory Assistance altogether; and

WHEREAS, there are groups of persons (including the blind) who for one reason or another cannot readily make use of personal telephone directories yet still have to bear the related costs; and

WHEREAS, there is no practical way at the present time or for the foreseeable future to make available personal telephone directories in a media that is readily accessible to the blind; and

WHEREAS, Directory Assistance service is extensively utilized by the general public, demonstrating that the Directory Assistance fulfills a significant public need; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization expresses its concern with any scheme which would make it more difficult to obtain information by individuals who cannot readily make use of personal telephone directories; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that subject to the discretion of the President of the National Federation of the Blind, avenues be established so that members from the organized blind movement may enter into negotiations with appropriate American Telephone and Telegraph Company

officials to the end that blind people will not be negatively affected with the adoption of a new policy in connection with telephone directory assistance service; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the National Federation of the Blind calls upon the American Telephone and Telegraph Company to maintain the Directory Assistance service program at the present high level of efficiency and make no significant change in said service until an appropriate plan is implemented to provide directory service without any loss of convenience for those who do not have the alternative of utilizing personal directories.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-03

WHEREAS, the number of titles available to blind readers is grossly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, only a small percentage of new print titles produced each year are available to the blind; and

WHEREAS, the projected plan of the Library of Congress, Division of the Blind and Physically Handicapped, will be to divert funds from producing titles usable by blind people to producing titles in a form appropriate only to those who can see; and

WHEREAS, the recorded media are appropriate equally for the blind and the seeing; and

WHEREAS, this projection would diminish and denigrate library service for the blind, thus exacerbating a problem which is already severe; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind supported the inclusion of the physically handicapped in the library services for the blind only in reliance upon the repeated and vehement denials by the Library of Congress that such inclusion would be in no way detrimental to services for the blind; and

WHEREAS, though the Federation endorses and supports the sharing of library materials produced for blind readers with all those who cannot read conventional print, we must oppose any policy which will divert funds away from library services for the blind; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 6th day of July, 1972, that this organization calls upon the Library of Congress to abandon all schemes, policies and projections having the effect of producing titles which would be unusable by blind readers.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-04

WHEREAS, it is the practice of most regional libraries serving the Blind to assign a person arbitrarily to select books to go to blind borrowers without regard for the borrowers' tastes and needs; and

WHEREAS, the concept of a "book selector", as opposed to a readers' advisor for the sighted borrower, is one which sets the blind borrower apart as requiring someone to make his reading decisions for him, rather than someone to provide guidance upon request; and

WHEREAS, the "book selector" system is unique to libraries for the blind and denies the ideal of service to the blind that is equal to service provided to the sighted in public libraries and serves to reinforce the fallacy held by too many libraries for the blind that their borrowers are not intelligent, responsible citizens who need the same library service any other borrower would need; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind has repeatedly asserted the superiority of the readers' advisor system; and

WHEREAS, this preference of blind Americans has been ignored by the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 6th day of July, 1972, that this Federation calls upon the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, to join with us in our efforts to replace the book selector system with the readers' advisor system, so that blind readers can receive competent advice upon request; and be it further

RESOLVED that this organization requests its State and local affiliates to contact their respective regional libraries to explain to each the problems presented by the book selector and the advantages of the readers' advisor.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-05

WHEREAS, library services are indispensable to the wellbeing of blind persons; and

WHEREAS, to date, library services to the blind have been woefully inadequate, piecemeal, and arbitrary, largely because many librarians view the blind as helpless and incompetent; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City

of Chicago, Illinois, this 6th day of July, 1972, that this organization urge regional libraries to take such steps as are necessary to insure that their personnel be both competent in librarianship and knowledgeable as to the nature and problems of blindness.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-06

WHEREAS, Congresswoman Louise Day Hicks of Massachusetts has introduced a bill in the House of Representatives, 92nd Congress, H.R.14626, which would authorize the expenditure of Federal funds by grants to States and local communities to pay for the cost of eye examination programs to detect glaucoma for the elderly; and

WHEREAS, glaucoma is one of the principal causes of blindness in the United States, particularly among elderly persons; and

WHEREAS, the ordinary eye examination will not detect the existence of glaucoma, but a special test must be conducted for this purpose, thus justifying the need for enactment and implementation of the Hicks' bill; and

WHEREAS, Americans in substantial numbers are today blind, when the prompt discovery of glaucoma would have prevented this occurrence; and

WHEREAS, the members of the National Federation of the Blind know and recognize that far too often elderly persons without sight are neglected and not helped to adjust to blindness so that blindness is a disaster in their lives; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind always has supported all reasonable and sensible efforts through research and study to prevent blindness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization commends and compliments Congresswoman Hicks for her sponsorship of H.R.14626, the glaucoma detection measure for the elderly; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the officers of this organization are directed to do all that is necessary, including the presentation of supporting testimony in Congressional hearings to assure enactment of the Hicks' bill into Federal law.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-07

WHEREAS, The United States Postal Service has launched a pilot project whereby four "Postiques" have been opened in post offices in four major cities of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service has announced that if the tests are favorable, other such retail outlets will be set up in the lobbies of many of the nation's 32,000 post offices; and

WHEREAS, the Postal Service has further announced that small red-carpeted outlets (Postiques) in the lobbies of the cities' main post offices are selling articles ranging in price from two cents to twelve dollars, the initial wares being mostly products of government agencies; and

WHEREAS, Postal Service officials stated it is expected that Postiques will bring 45% profit on sales as income into the treasury of the Postal Service; and

WHEREAS, Postiques will be government-operated competitors of blind-operated vending facilities under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act and represent a substantial threat to the livelihood of several hundred blind persons who now earn their living from businesses located in Federal post offices; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July 1972, that this organization deplores and condemns the plans of the Postal Service to open postal stores in the lobbies of post offices; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization firmly believes that it is far more important to the nation, generally, that blind persons continue to be afforded the chance to earn a living in vending facilities located in post offices; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization directs its officers to take all steps necessary, including negotiation, legislation, and court action, to eliminate the threat posed by postal stores to blind-managed and operated vending facilities in post offices.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-08

WHEREAS, Senator Jacob Javits of New York has introduced a bill, S.3446, which would amend the Small Business Act to allow sheltered workshops to obtain loans to procure machinery and equipment and for other purposes directed toward broadening and expanding the productive capacity of sheltered workshops; and

WHEREAS, such loans would be at interest and would have to be repaid, thus adding a fiscal burden upon the already over-burdened financial structure of sheltered workshops; and

WHEREAS, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act as amended through 1965 authorizes the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to make grants for the construction and equipping of sheltered workshops and for the sharing in the compensation of professional or technical personnel, and such grants are free of interest and need not be repaid, thus making loans from Small Business Administration both unnecessary and undesirable by comparison; and

WHEREAS, The National Federation of the Blind believes S. 3446 is another action in a continuing effort to develop sheltered workshops as a major resource for permanent employment when instead, as our national economy grows in diversity, sheltered workshops should be diminishing in size and importance, since disabled individuals in ever increasing numbers should be absorbed in the jobs offered and available in competitive business and industry, thereby leaving employment in sheltered workshops only for those few handicapped persons who, by reason of multi-handicapping conditions or age, are unable to function in jobs in the open economy; and

WHEREAS, sheltered workshops are operated as non-profit business enterprises and thus are not subject to taxation on their income and if they are encouraged and assisted to grow and expand to the point where they compete for production work with tax-paying businesses, a justifiable protest will arise from tax-paying businesses and sheltered workshops will be strictured and reduced in their activities so that they may no longer be able to meet the needs of those few disabled people unable to work successfully in the regular economy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July 1972, that this organization expresses its strong and vigorous opposition to S.3446; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization directs its officers to take all steps necessary, including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to prevent S. 3446 from being enacted into Federal law.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-09

WHEREAS, more than 400 blind men and women are presently successfully employed as elementary and secondary teachers in public school systems throughout the nation, including more than one hundred in the state of California alone; and

WHEREAS, these blind teachers are engaged to teach classes from kindergarten through high school; and

WHEREAS, these blind teachers have so fully demonstrated their capabilities and competencies for imparting knowledge, managing and coping with all manner of classroom needs, activities, and programs, and doing all usually and reasonably expected of public school teachers, that they have earned a recognition of their successfully exercised teaching talents by obtaining tenure in their positions and have been granted, given and awarded testimonials, awards, and other symbols of appreciation by both administrative school officials and by the parents of the children being taught by them; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the conclusive evidence that blind persons can teach sighted children well and successfully in the public elementary and secondary schools of the nation, blind men and women—educated, trained, and qualified applicants for teaching employment in the public school systems—encounter prejudice and discrimination and are frequently refused even the least consideration of their credentials and are refused the chance to either explain or to demonstrate their methods and techniques; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July 1972, that this organization directs its officers to prepare an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that will outlaw and prohibit discrimination against educated, trained and qualified blind applicants for teaching positions and for any and all other positions under such Act, and to do all necessary to secure enactment of such amendment into Federal law in order that blind persons seeking teaching and other employments in the field of education may be assured of evaluation by prospective employers on their merits, that they may no longer be rejected and refused simply because they are blind; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the National Education Association, The American Federation of Teachers, and all other related organizations, in order to secure their understanding and cooperation in the solution of this most urgent problem.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-10

WHEREAS, Congress has enacted into Federal law the Older Americans Act under which programs are being operated to assist elderly persons to be able better to function with the consequences of advancing years; and

WHEREAS, elderly blind persons experience the usual disadvantageous effects of advanced years with some of such effects compounded and magnified into increased severity by reason of the loss of sight and the lack of adjustment to blindness and the lack of receiving

skilled training in the successful management of blindness; and

WHEREAS, elderly blind persons have need for a publicly provided program under which there can be made available to them certain essential helps and services among which are home-maker services, shopping service, special transportation and escort service, reader service, letter-writing service, and other personal services designed to assist such individuals in the management of a household and in the management of their own lives; and

WHEREAS, the availability of the foregoing aids and services would enable older blind Americans to cope with the results of the loss of sight in their lives and would make it possible for many of such persons to remain with their families without being a burden to them or to remain alone in their own homes, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization directs its officers to draft legislation as an amendment to the Older Americans Act to contain provisions to make available to older blind persons the services above enumerated; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization direct its officers to do all that is necessary including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to secure adoption by Congress of such amendment to the Older Americans Act.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-11

WHEREAS, Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey has introduced S.J. Res. 202 in the United States Senate, 92nd Congress, calling upon the President of the United States to convene a White House Conference on the Handicapped; and

WHEREAS, the announced purpose of the White House Conference on the Handicapped is to focus public attention on the problems of handicapped persons; and

WHEREAS, handicapped persons are most familiar with their problems which are a consequence of their handicaps, and are thus best qualified to speak for themselves and about themselves, and to offer remedies and solutions to their problems; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization urges that should such a White House Conference on the Handicapped be called, that all the participants in such conference should be handicapped persons speaking for themselves, representatives of organizations of handicapped persons, with staff and resources as they may deem necessary;

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the officers of this organization are directed to take all steps necessary, including the distribution of this resolution to appropriate persons that the purpose of this resolution may be realized and fulfilled.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-12

WHEREAS, Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey has introduced S. 3407 in the United States Senate and Congressman John Brademas of Indiana has introduced H.R. 14886 in the House of Representatives, 92nd Congress, and they are identical bills, and

WHEREAS, S. 3407 and H.R. 14886 would amend the Education of the Handicapped Act to improve opportunities for handicapped persons by authorizing the expenditure of Federal funds for sensory and communication devices essential for educating the handicapped; and

WHEREAS, by employing modern technology in the education of the handicapped, methods and techniques can be developed, instruments, tools, and devices can be created and adapted as alternatives to those used by the physically fit, and by reason of the availability of such alternatives in education, the handicapped will be enabled to obtain a more realistic education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July 1972, that this organization commends Senator Williams and Congressman Brademas for their sponsorship of S.3407 and H.R.14886 and directs its officers to take all steps necessary, including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to secure adoption of these worthwhile legislative proposals; and be it further

RESOLVED that while this Federation supports the aims of research it earnestly urges that such research would be enhanced and rendered more relevant and significant through consultation with the handicapped including the blind, the ultimate consumers of the results of such research.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-13

WHEREAS, Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey has introduced S.3614 in the United States Senate, 92nd Congress, "to provide financial assistance to the States for improved educational services for handicapped children;" and

WHEREAS, S.3614 has as its purpose "to insure that all handicapped children receive maximum special educational services not later than 1976, to insure that State and local education agencies fulfill their primary responsibilities in providing such services," and

WHEREAS, when handicapped children are denied adequate educational opportunities, such children grow into handicapped adults who are dependent for all of their lives upon others and exist throughout all of their lives upon the taxes paid by others; and

WHEREAS, when handicapped children are provided with adequate and fair and full educational opportunities, such children grow into adults who are prepared and qualified to live normal and valued lives and to function competently and successfully in the professions and common callings in the nation's economy, paying taxes upon their earnings and contributing by their developed talents and abilities to the growth and strength of the nation and to the enrichment of the nation's life; and

WHEREAS, all money spent to transform and convert handicapped children into independent and self-sufficient adults is money spent as a capital investment with interest accruing in amounts far greater than originally put forth, and thus such expenditure of public funds is an economically wise and fiscally sensible expenditure; and

WHEREAS, affording handicapped children the chance to realize their potential in talents and abilities is to offer handicapped children the opportunity to share in the American Dream, and such financial investment changes ideals into realities and national purposes into actualities in the lives of handicapped American citizens; and

WHEREAS, it is the special concern of the National Federation of the Blind that blind children receive their fair share of funds allocated for the education of handicapped children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization endorses S. 3614; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Federation directs its officers to take all steps necessary, including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to secure adoption of this most worthwhile proposal now pending before Congress; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Federation make certain that the needs of blind children are duly recognized and that they receive their proportionate fair share of any funds allocated under

S.3614.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-14

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind has believed since its founding in 1940 that all persons who are blind must be given a full, fair, and equal opportunity to develop their talents and abilities to the greatest possible extent, and should be provided with all help necessary to them to achieve this socially desirable and economically sensible result; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind has, from its very inception, championed the cause and concerns of deaf-blind persons; and

WHEREAS, when a proposal was being considered during the 90th Congress to amend the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to authorize the establishment of a national center for deaf-blind youths and adults, the National Federation of the Blind presented supporting testimony in hearings in both the House of Representatives and in the United States Senate, urging approval of the deaf-blind center; and

WHEREAS, the 90th Congress responded to the unmet needs of the deaf-blind and authorized the establishment of a national center for deaf-blind youths and adults, and authorized the appropriation of such federal funds as were found to be necessary to build, equip, and operate this center; and

WHEREAS, Federal funds in specific amount were made available by Congress to construct the National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults; and

WHEREAS, construction costs have greatly risen since the original funding, and it is now essential that Congress authorize and appropriate additional funds to make this center a functioning reality; and

WHEREAS, the sum of \$5,000,000.00 is needed to meet the expenses incidental to the construction of facilities for the deaf-blind center, and the sum of \$800,000.00 is needed to meet the expenses of operating such a center for the ensuing fiscal year, and both amounts must be included in the 1973 Budget so construction may be promptly commenced, furnishings and equipment ordered, and staff employed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization reaffirms its position in support of the National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults, and directs its officers to forward this resolution to members of the Senate and House Committees on

Appropriations, and to other appropriate persons; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization directs its officers to take additional actions as are deemed necessary that adequate Federal funding may be made available by Congress for the construction, equipping, staffing, and operating of the National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-15

Referred by Resolutions Committee to Committee on the Senior Blind

RESOLUTION 72-16

WHEREAS, the duty to serve on a jury is a necessary concomitant of full citizenship and equal responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the exclusion of blind persons from this duty on the ground of blindness is an exclusion based on an assumption of their essential inferiority and incompetence; and

WHEREAS, even though blind persons have served competently on juries from time to time, such service is infrequent and it is still the general practice to exclude the blind from jury service; and

WHEREAS, such exclusion from the duties of citizenship is, by implication, a denial of the rights of citizenship as well; and

WHEREAS, a court in the State of Washington recently ruled that a person could lawfully be excluded from jury duty because of blindness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July 1972, that this organization commends the Washington State Association of the Blind for the vigorous action it is taking at the State level in an effort to correct this ancient and unjust practice; and be it further

RESOLVED that the President of the National Federation of the Blind be authorized to allocate funds from our national treasury in the event such funds are needed for either court or legislative action in an effort to rectify this abuse of civil responsibility; and be it further

RESOLVED that this organization strongly urges each of its state affiliates to take prompt

and vigorous action to see to it that blind persons in their respective states are afforded the right to serve on juries by securing passage of appropriate legislation.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-17

Tabled by Resolutions Committee

RESOLUTION 72-18

Rejected by Convention

RESOLUTION 72-19

WHEREAS, the already inadequate public transportation services throughout the nation are constantly being curtailed; and

WHEREAS, the inadequacy and curtailment of services places millions of Americans who lack private means of transportation in a position where they cannot earn a livelihood and otherwise lead normal lives; and

WHEREAS, the blind population of the nation is especially harmed as a consequence of such inadequacy of public transportation services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this Federation calls attention to this hardship worked upon the blind as well as others and urges public transportation authorities everywhere, as well as other public officials, to call a halt to further curtailment, and instead, to expand public transportation facilities so that they become readily available to all citizens everywhere, including the blind and otherwise disabled; and be it further

RESOLVED that this Federation respectfully requests public transportation authorities, both Federal and local, to consult with this Federation as to the needs of the blind in the design and expansion of such facilities and services.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-20

WHEREAS, Senator Wallace Bennett of Utah has introduced in the United States Senate, 92nd Congress, S. 3643, the Allied Services Act; and

WHEREAS, S. 3643 is an Administration measure and represents the present thinking in Washington and has the full support of the White House behind it; and

WHEREAS, S. 3643 would make possible and authorize the coordination and consolidation of Federally-assisted State programs through which social services are provided; and

WHEREAS, the arguments given in justification of S. 3643 are already well-known to Federationists: the elimination of service duplication, improved delivery of services when clients need go to only one source for several services, greater administrative simplicity and efficiency, and the reduction of the cost of service programs by the elimination of duplication; and

WHEREAS, under the Allied Services Act, separate and categorical State programs of services for the blind which are financed all or in part by Federal funds may be "coordinated" into a massive generalized agency in which the programs of services for the blind will lose their administrative identity and soundly-based philosophic orientation; and

WHEREAS, in such a massive generalized agency, services for the blind would be provided by personnel generally qualified but not particularly oriented to the problems of blindness and equipped by training and experience to solve these problems; and

WHEREAS, funding for programs of services for the blind would be deeply buried in the huge budget for the general administrative agency offering slight chance for obtaining adequate funding; and

WHEREAS, the blind of this nation have learned from unhappy experience that when programs of services for the blind are coordinated with or consolidated into programs of similar services intended for other types of handicapped persons, the blind are not served, their special and uniquely different needs are not understood and provided for, and they are neglected and given short shrift, and they become victims of low quality and insufficient quantity of services; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind reminds the Administration as sponsor of S. 3643, and it also reminds the Congress which must consider this measure and act upon it, that the only question that should govern or in any way affect the administrative structure of programs of social services intended to meet the needs of people is to determine those needs and how best to meet them rather than to "simplify" administration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City

of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization condemns S. 3643 and similar legislation and deplores the governmental philosophy embodied in it, that would place administrative efficiency and economy above program purposes and program goals to be served and directs its officers to do all that is necessary, including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to defeat and prevent enactment of the Allied Services Act into Federal law

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-21

WHEREAS, Congress has enacted legislation described as the Manpower Training and Development Act, under which the Department of Labor is authorized and directed to establish job preparation programs to train unemployed and under-employed workers for industrial employment and to assist trainees to secure work in accordance with their acquired and developed abilities and skills in the industry of the nation; and

WHEREAS, when blind persons apply for admission to Manpower training and development programs, far too often they are told that such programs are not structured to train blind persons for jobs and program officials refer blind applicants to the State vocational rehabilitation agency for the blind; and

WHEREAS, even though such blind applicants say that they have already been to the State vocational rehabilitation agency for the blind and have received no help at all or have received help of a kind and caliber completely unsatisfactory to them and totally insufficient for their needs, still they are refused admission to the Manpower Training and Development programs; and

WHEREAS, the negative attitude of Manpower Training and Development personnel denies to blind people a job training alternative to vocational rehabilitation which should properly and legally be available to them as it is intended to be available to all American citizens wishing to work and wishing to obtain necessary preparation and training for work and aid in securing work; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization directs its officers to draft legislation as an amendment to the Manpower Training and Development Act which will prohibit continued exclusion of persons from programs operated under the Act solely by reason of their blindness or severely impaired vision, and to also include in such legislation the establishment under the Manpower Training and Development Act a section expressly designed for the purpose of preparing blind workers for jobs in open and competitive industry and aiding them to obtain employment following completion of training; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization directs its officers to do all that is necessary, including the presentation of testimony in Congressional hearings, to secure adoption by Congress of such amendment to the Manpower Training and Development Act.

Adopted

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RESOLUTION 72-22

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has issued Executive orders in accordance with which there has been created in the Department of Commerce a sectional unit on Minority Business Concessions to promote and facilitate the establishment of small business on Federal property to be owned and operated by members of racial and ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS, this program has particular significance and importance for blind persons for it represents a major and serious threat to the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Program, to the possibility of obtaining desirable locations for merchandising businesses operated by blind persons on Federal property, and to the articles to be sold by blind persons in vending stands; and

WHEREAS, there have already been instances where space in a Federal building has been refused to a State licensing agency for the establishment of a vending stand but the same space has been made available for the establishment of a minority business concession; and

WHEREAS, there have already been instances of minority business concessions that have been opened and allowed to sell articles being sold by blind-operated vending stands located on the same Federal premises; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the city of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that while this organization commends the efforts of the President of the United States to aid and assist members of racial and ethnic minorities to become independent businessmen as blind people have been aided and assisted to become independent businessmen under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act, we believe existing and potential employment opportunities for the blind authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Law should not be jeopardized, diminished, or in any way curtailed by minority business concessions; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that this organization directs its officers to take all steps necessary, including negotiation, administrative review and appeal, and recourse to the courts and to the legislative branches of government, to abate the danger posed by the Minority Business Concessions movement to the livelihoods of blind persons gained by the operation and management of vending facilities located on Federal property.

Adopted

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RESOLUTION 72-23

WHEREAS, the United States Information Agency Libraries in foreign countries provide extensive reading materials for sighted persons; and

WHEREAS, overseas blind persons are totally deprived of such reading resources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization urges the United States Information Agency to make available Braille and recorded materials for the blind

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-24

WHEREAS, library services for the blind, always inadequate, are now deteriorating; and

WHEREAS, the selection of titles to be produced in media for the blind tends to be frivolous and capricious, with relative neglect of the needs of the serious reader; and

WHEREAS, the deterioration of library services to the blind has manifested itself in many ways, including: a reduction in the number of Braille distributing libraries throughout the nation, a reduction in the number of press Braille titles produced suitable for adult readers, the inadequate cataloguing of hand-copied Braille titles with the necessary result of their limited circulation; and

WHEREAS, the systematic de-emphasis of Braille has continued despite technological developments which should make it possible for the various libraries easily to expand and extend the use of Braille titles; and

WHEREAS, the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is advocating a system known as subregionalization, whereby books are removed from the central collections and scattered in other libraries in each region; and

WHEREAS, regional libraries are following this recommendation; and

WHEREAS, these trends have continued despite a long history of repeated efforts on the part of the National Federation of the Blind to halt and reverse these trends by bringing them to the attention of officials of the Library of Congress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 6th day of July, 1972, that this Federation, having exhausted all

administrative channels, now seeks a remedy for this deplorable situation by procuring appropriate action by the Congress of the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED that copies of this resolution, together with other relevant materials, be sent to all members of Congress and to such other persons and agencies as the Federation's President deems fitting.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-25

Referred by Resolutions Committee to Research and Evaluation Committee

RESOLUTION 72-26

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind exists to promote the rights of the blind; and

WHEREAS, one way to promote these rights is through national legislation; and

WHEREAS, national legislators have not yet fully realized that the blind, like other minorities, need governmental action to insure fair treatment and free access to the opportunities of this Nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled in the City of Chicago, Illinois, this 7th day of July, 1972, that this organization take all necessary steps to insure consideration of the blind by the next President and the 93rd Congress through inclusion of planks in the Republican and Democratic Party platforms on equal opportunity for the blind; and be it further

RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind specifically urge that the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 be extended to the blind.

Adopted

RESOLUTION 72-27

Rejected by the Convention



